

USING CRUCIBLE EVENTS AS CATALYSTS FOR MALE ENGAGEMENT IN THE
EGALITARIAN CHURCH

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To Sad-Clowns Everywhere

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”

— *Matthew 16:24-26*

Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world...
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

— Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*

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OBT's story of the Third500 led me to discover the research of Daniel Levinson (Table 4: Stages of a Man's Life). Also, a conversation with Dredd helped develop the continuum between Sad-clowns and Assholes (Table 1: Struggles Men Face) that connects with Vandello's research into a "Hard Won and Easily Lost" masculinity. Once I began to dig into this research I excitedly told OBT and Dredd that they had created a mission that aligned with the expressed needs of our community and asked them if they had seen these same studies. They replied, "We did not need to study this, brother, we have lived it." So I am grateful for their lives and the way they have built a movement that has changed many men's life trajectories. Thank you, men, for the privilege of studying and learning from your work.

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ABSTRACT

Using the biblical archetypes of Adam and Cain, who respond to challenges through avoidance or aggression, this thesis-project explores the impact of crucibles as mechanisms for confirming a man's masculinity while also catalyzing their leadership development. Through the theories of precarious masculinity, male development psychology, and the hero's quest, a purposeful masculinity is contrasted against Adamic passivity and Cainite hyper-masculinity. The research uses statistical analysis of Factor-Five personality tests and qualitative interviews of participants in F3. The result is that men whose masculinity has been confirmed through intentional physical crucibles are more willing to engage feminine environments.

PROLOGUE

I received a phone call one afternoon from a man of our church saying he needed to meet with me. A few months earlier, I had taught a confirmation class attended by his wife and daughter, although I had not spent much time with the man. When he arrived, my pastoral senses were on high alert as I tried to deduce the reason for the visit. For fifty minutes I explored whether there were any issues in his marriage, his job or his life generally. As the hour approached, it felt like a fruitless endeavor.

While we were wrapping up, he said, “Oh, by the way, I am part of a men’s group in town called F3, which stands for Fitness, Fellowship and Faith. We workout at Freedom Park starting at 5:30am. You should join us some time.” When I heard the name, I felt a stirring in my heart. It sounded like the convergence of my three favorite things. Life had become routine. I was serving a 200 year-old congregation, had recently purchased a home to shelter my daughter and triplet boys, and had crested ten years of marriage. My life felt secure, but unfulfilling.

I went home that night and scoured F3’s website. Although intimidated by the group, I knew this church member would be there, and that inspired me to attend my first workout the next morning. As cars arrived into a gravel parking lot, I wondered how good I would be against these other men. Within the first fifteen minutes, I discovered my answer. Though I had recently completed a marathon, trying to keep up with these men caused my heart-rate to spike as I ran gasping up a hill. Midway, I was passed by a 50 year-old man dressed in camouflage, who still had enough oxygen to talk constantly in my ear. My ego was instantly humbled. However, by surviving this first workout, the group welcomed me warmly and bestowed on me the nickname “Agony.”

After a few months of working out regularly with these men, I was approached by a young man who said, “You are a pastor in town? My pastor would never be out here working out with us. You are not a pastor, you are just one of us.” Because we had bonded during our hour-long workout, in the parking lot this man began to share the personal struggles he was encountering.

God grabbed my heart that morning as I headed towards the comforts of my church office, supposedly to prepare for a Wednesday worship service. God had shown me that instead of trying to attract men to our building, that gravel parking lot was where the men were gathering and where the Gospel needed to go. Having been trained in an incarnational philosophy of ministry by Young Life, I was reminded of Jim Rayburn's words about “winning the right to be heard.” By showing up and struggling together, I had won the right to share the Gospel with these men.

This community of men ignited a masculinity that had become dormant and effected a transformation in my life. Shortly after, I formally left a large, egalitarian, mainline church in order to plant a church for a startup denomination. Following the steps of Paul in Acts 18:7, I left the security of the religious institution in order to “move next door” to be with the men of our community.

When our new church launched, I approached the man who had cold-called me months before and asked, “Why did you come to my office that afternoon? That was a very awkward conversation.” He responded that after his wife had heard me teach the students, she began praying we would become friends. Through her prayers, the man’s invitation, and the men of F3, God catalyzed a personal transformation within my ministry, marriage, and life.

In that moment, I realized how desperate I had become for challenges that would disrupt the status quo; I saw how lonely I had become; and I recognized how I had hungered for a purposeful ministry that sought men where they were rather than waiting for them to show up at my office. This revelation radically reshaped my ministry because I realized I had become the saddest of sad-clowns. Through F3 a new mission emerged. Having experienced and witnessed the positive impact of crucible experiences in my own life, I conducted this research in order to explore other men's experiences with F3. In particular, I wondered if others had discovered the power of intentional physical crucibles to bond men together so that they are more confident and equipped to lead in their spheres of influence.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A man can be understood by knowing the questions that burn hotly within him.

-Larry Crabb, *The Silence of Adam*

Two men walk into a researcher's office. They are greeted by a female assistant who randomly assigns each of them one of two tasks. The woman also informs them that they will be videotaped, thereby implying that the tasks are to be publicly performed.

While these men have been assigned different tasks, both require the same sort of effort. One man will braid a mannequin's hair and the other will put together a rope. While similar in style, unlike the rope task, the hairstyling task "induce[s] men to perform an ostensibly public, stereotypically feminine hairstyling task."¹

After performing these tasks, the two men are taken to a secondary location where they are given an opportunity to choose either rearranging a puzzle or punching a punching bag. The man who was given the feminized task of braiding is twice as likely to select the punching task as a means of restoring his masculinity than the man who was assigned the rope task.²

Researchers discovered that when masculinity is publicly threatened through perceived feminization, those men are more likely to "restore their manhood through displays of aggressive posturing."³ Through a variety of follow-up experiments, the researchers also found that men whose masculinity had been threatened, not only displayed aggressive posturing, but they also

¹ Jennifer K. Bosson et al., "Precarious Manhood and Displays of Physical Aggression," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 35 (February 6, 2009): 625.

² Jennifer K. Bosson and Joseph A. Vandello, "Hard Won and Easily Lost: A Review and Synthesis of Theory and Research on Precarious Manhood," *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 14 (2013): 105.

³ Bosson and Vandello, "Hard Won and Easily Lost," 105.

had heightened anxiety, physically aggressive thoughts, were more likely to take financial risks while gambling, and would punch a punching bag with greater force.⁴

These experiments are the basis of Jennifer Bosson and Joseph Vandello's research into the precarious nature of masculinity. Their conclusion is that when men receive perceived threats to their masculinity they are likely to respond in a hyper-masculine form in order to retain their manhood.⁵

There is another method men use to maintain their manhood, however: avoidance. "One way to forestall questions about one's manhood is to eschew feminine behaviors, preferences, traits and desires."⁶ Men will intentionally avoid feminized environments that have the potential to threaten their masculinity. Psychologist Cheryan noticed that if a man earns less income than his wife, something that produces a threatened status, he is less likely to participate in domestic chores around the house.⁷ In their studies of female-dominated occupations such as nursing and teaching, they found that men tend to disassociate from these environments by reconstructing their occupations, often leaving "the other less interesting and rewarding tasks for women to do."⁸ By avoiding the threat of feminization, the man seeks to prop-up his masculine identity.

⁴ Bosson and Vandello, "Hard Won and Easily Lost," 105.

⁵ The term hyper-masculinity used in this paper is drawn from the scholarly work of Aaron James. He uses a provocative term in his book title: *Assholes: A Theory*, in order to explore the type of man that is characterized by the term "asshole": "A person counts as an asshole when, and only when, he systematically allows himself to enjoy special privileges in interpersonal relations out of an entrenched sense of entitlement that immunizes him against the complaints of other people." Hyper-masculinity thus signifies a man who vigorously divides himself from others due to an entrenched sense of self-importance. Aaron James, *Assholes: A Theory* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2014), 5.

⁶ Bosson and Vandello, "Precarious Manhood: Theory and Research," 105.

⁷ Sapna Cheryan et al., "Manning Up: Threatened Men Compensate by Disavowing Feminine Preferences and Embracing Masculine Attributes," *Social Psychology* 46, no. 4 (August 2015): 226.

⁸ Ben Lupton, "Maintaining Masculinity: Men Who Do 'Women's Work'," *British Journal of Management* 11 (September 2000): 46.

If men, however, are unthreatened, they are more willing to embrace the feminine. Sapna Cheryan discovered that when men are “not under threat, men did not differ in their preferences for feminine or masculine products.”⁹ Therefore, it is the threatened status that causes men to react against or avoid emasculating experiences.

For many men, the church has also become a feminized environment and they tend to either aggressively dominate this masculine-threatening environment or avoid it all together. The former corrosive hyper-masculinity was seen in Mark Driscoll’s ministry,¹⁰ while male avoidance is evidenced in another study which found that men “who have been unemployed in the last ten years are also less likely to attend church services than their employed counterparts.”¹¹

Since the 1660s, male participation in the church has been lower than female engagement at a ratio of 1-to-2: one man for every two women.¹² Leon Podles locates the beginning of the feminization of the church earlier in church history by pointing to the high Middle Ages.¹³ This suggests that male engagement in the church is also a precarious involvement, which needs constant attention and methodological adaption.

Since the late 1800s, men’s ministries have been established, usually outside the church, in an attempt to recapture the masculine spirit. Most of the existing research into male

⁹ Cheryan, “Manning Up,” 225.

¹⁰ Mark Driscoll, the former pastor of Mars Hill, was known for bombastic statements about the need to reclaim a macho-Christianity. In 2015, Mars Hill began to falter due to Driscoll’s harsh treatment of staff, leadership style and hyper-masculinity.

¹¹ Elizabeth Bruenig, “The Failure of Macho Christianity,” *New Republic*, last modified February 24, 2015, accessed February 24, 2017, <https://newrepublic.com/article/121138/mark-driscoll-and-macho-christianity>.

¹² Gail Bederman, “‘The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough’: The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism,” *American Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1989): 435.

¹³ Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas, TX: Spence: 1999), 36.

disengagement from the church has been conducted from a complementarian perspective. Also, many modern men's ministries, such as Promise Keepers, were focused on redeveloping a patriarchal hierarchy. R. W. Connell noticed that Promise Keepers follows "the model of a social movement" that became a "vehicle for promoting patriarchal understandings of masculinity."¹⁴ Since a complementarian theology espouses male headship in the home and church, it establishes an external mandate requiring men to lead in these "feminized" environments. This immediately reduces the feminine threat to these men's masculinities.

An important question emerges from focusing on egalitarian churches.¹⁵ What prevents men from engaging with the egalitarian church? Also, can men be intrinsically motivated to lead alongside women in the church and home?

When looking deeper into contemporary mainline egalitarian churches, it is noticeable that 72 percent of these churches have a "gender gap."¹⁶ Furthermore, churches led by female

¹⁴ Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 209.

¹⁵ In this paper, egalitarianism is a term used to describe a community of faith that recognizes female leadership among ruling elders and teaching elders. It suggests equality in opportunity. One presupposition is a theological and biblical basis for female leadership within the church. It is beyond the scope of this research to argue for or against the appropriateness of female elders and pastors. This research can, however, also be differentiated from other work on egalitarianism, because while a biblical argument for female leadership is presupposed, the nature of this work also suggests that masculinity and femininity are not identical. They have unique characteristics. The text therefore differentiates between the masculine and the feminine. The argument is that for full completion of the hero's quest, the man must reintegrate with the woman, because the church needs both to be equally harnessed for truly effective egalitarian leadership: "The picture of Eden...is of equality, yet difference...Genesis 3 gives us a picture of the ruling male and the struggling female—but that is a description of the distortions caused by sin. Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 speak of sexual equality, mutuality and joy in 'la difference.'"

David John Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11: The Dawn of Creation*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1990), 73.

For further exploration of this topic, Aida Spencer's *Beyond the Curse*; Roland Cap Ehlke's "A Woman's Place: The Evangelical Debate over the Role of Women in the Church"; Kenneth Bailey's "Women in the New Testament: A Middle Eastern Cultural View"; and Jim Singleton's lecture at ECO National Gathering on January 27, 2017, are excellent resources.

¹⁶ David Murrow defines a church with a gender gap as a community where women attendees outnumber men by at least 12 percent. David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 55.

pastors have the largest gender gap. In communities where female leadership is not only accepted, but has become the norm, male participation dissipates further. Men are missing from the egalitarian church. This creates the most challenging church environment for the masculine spirit to reintegrate with the feminine after men experience tests of manhood.

If a man's masculinity remains untested and unconfirmed, he will feel threatened by the feminine. This is why the egalitarian church is an environment of great challenge in terms of male participation. Female leadership threatens masculinity, thereby creating a larger barrier for men. Therefore, as the external constraints of ecclesial polity are removed, male participation decreases. As a result, the egalitarian church has a greater tendency to become a feminized church environment.¹⁷ When not required, male leadership, commitment and participation dissipate within the church. Since in egalitarian churches men do not have to be leaders, male reengagement has to be self-motivated. Therefore, men need a process for testing and confirming their manhood that will remove their existential threat so they are motivated to reengage the feminine.

One feminist concern is that male-only rituals will lead to patriarchal abuses. This concern is not always valid, however. Anthropologist David Gilmore notes that people often misconstrue masculine rites of passage as reflective of patriarchal oppression. His studies show that it is not universally true. For example:

In the [!Kung] African Bushmen [who are] a model of sexual egalitarianism...boys must prove their manhood by hunting prowess. They must also undergo tests of hardiness and skill from which girls are executives. Their manhood is subject to proof and conceptually, to diminishment or loss. The same is true of the Fox and the Tewa of North America.¹⁸

¹⁷ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 55.

¹⁸ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 24.

Gilmore writes that while manhood rituals are more prominent in patriarchal societies, “They also occur in many societies where men are physically gentle and where the sexes exist in relative equality.”¹⁹ It is therefore possible for masculinity to be constructed apart from the feminine without becoming patriarchal. It is reintegration that becomes the final crucial step.

If the masculine spirit remains absent, it impacts the church negatively, by limiting the full expression of the body of Christ. Rather than embracing the fullness of femininity and masculinity working together, the missing man denies the church the opportunity to harness the masculine spirit’s agentic and risk-taking nature, and the masculine desire to embrace challenges as means of transformation. Leon Podles argues as follows:

As men absented themselves from the Christian churches and found their spiritual sustenance elsewhere, the churches were left with congregations that were predominately feminine. Moreover, the Christian life itself was seen more and more as properly feminine—men had to become feminine in order to be good Christians...²⁰

Podles continues that this feminized shift leads to an emphasis upon wholeness, nurture and healing through doctrines of maternal mysticism, bridal imagery, and a motherly messiah.²¹ Because of the lack of masculine engagement, the church has diluted its emphasis upon challenge, conversion and brotherly community. In so doing, the body of Christ has not effectively demonstrated the duality of masculinity and femininity working collaboratively.

One reason for this disengagement of men from the church may be the masculine tendency to reject femininity. Psychologists have noticed that masculinity is a tenuously held identity that is constantly threatened by the feminine.²² Therefore men’s encounters with a

¹⁹ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 167.

²⁰ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 113.

²¹ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 113-121.

²² Bosson and Vandello, “Hard Won and Easily Lost,” 101-113.

feminized sphere cause them to fear judgment from other men and create “problems with their self-perception.”²³ Feeling that their masculinity is threatened, men tend to respond with either hyper-masculinity—as demonstrated in the Vandello experiments—or passivity, as noticed in the disengagement of men from the local church. These responses help men to disassociate themselves from the feminized environment. Thus, not only are men missing from the church, they are also not inclined to reengage with the church on their own for fear of losing their masculinity.

This creates a circular problem: the lack of a masculine spirit in the church pushes men further away from the church, which in turn further dilutes the masculine spirit. There is therefore a need for men to participate in the life of the church and actively lead the community, not only to bring a balancing effect to the feminization of the church, but also to attract other men into these communities so that they might be transformed by the Gospel.

One way for churches to engage men is through shared male-only experiences that challenge them. As Patrick Morley states, “men’s lives are changed as they rub up against other men’s lives.”²⁴ Men tend to form bonds of community through shared struggles.²⁵ As Joseph Vandello argues, the precarious nature of masculinity requires a communal affirmation: “Manhood is primarily confirmed by others and thus requires public demonstration for proof.”²⁶ It is therefore important to provide men with male-only space in which they may be challenged physically, mentally and emotionally, in order to demonstrate their masculinity and receive

²³ Ruth Simpson, “Masculinity at Work: The Experiences of Men in Female Dominated Occupations,” *Work, Employment and Society* 18 (June): 356-357.

²⁴ Patrick Morley, “Reaching the Disconnected Male : How to Move Men on the Fringe into Active, Focused Discipleship,” *Leadership* (Winter 2001): 78.

²⁵ Rodney Cooper, *Shoulder to Shoulder: From Isolation to Brotherhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997).

²⁶ Bosson and Vandello, “Hard Won and Easily Lost,” 101.

public confirmation. When men persevere through trials that confirm their masculine identity, they feel more secure.

In Bosson and Vandello's research, if a man's masculinity is confirmed prior to the feminized task, he will actually participate and find value in the tasks. The security of his masculine identity makes him more capable of reentering feminized environments. In fact, men expressed benefits from a perceived feminized event (hair-braiding), only if they had publicly demonstrated their masculinity prior to the task:

One consequence of avoiding femininity is that it can reduce men's pursuit of experiences that might otherwise benefit them. In one experiment, men who performed an intrinsically engaging, novel hair-braiding activity actually benefited psychologically from the experience, but only if their concerns about their manhood status were assuaged by allowing them to proclaim their heterosexuality to their ostensible audience.

When unconcerned about their manhood, men in this study reported heightened feelings of autonomy (volitional self-determination) following the hairstyling activity, which indicates that the enactment of this novel behavior temporarily boosted men's psychological well-being.²⁷

This suggests that men who have been able to affirm their manhood in front of a group of men will benefit and be better prepared to enter the feminized church.

These masculinity confirming challenges have become crucible events in the men's lives.²⁸ By embracing the intentionality and public nature of these challenges, men are engaged in processes of reorientation. Crucible events can take multiple forms, yet they have a singular purpose, namely challenging a man to reevaluate his self-identity. Daniel Levinson describes

²⁷ Bosson and Vandello, "Hard Won and Easily Lost," 105.

²⁸ In this research, the term "crucible" refers to an event that challenges a man physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally or vocationally. "Crucibles" encompass broad meanings to include events such as ultra races, marriage, cancer diagnosis, job-changes, or, as the author experienced, changing thirty-three diapers in one day for his newborn triplets. The statistical analysis of this research will be primarily focused on the role of intentional physical challenges due to the nature of the F3, however. These are events men have chosen to participate in.

these trials as periods of a man's life that prompt assessment and adjustments in order to form a new identity.²⁹

Such crucible events cause the man to question and reappraise his life, and can be physical events, such as endurance races, which force him to exert underutilized energy. They might also be vocational challenges (unexpected job loss), relational encounters (marital discord), or emotional crucibles (depression). These crucibles force men to either retreat into isolation, react with aggression, or to receive validation from other men as they embrace the challenge.³⁰ If they receive confirmation from other men that they are still “men,” an enduring camaraderie can emerge from these periods of change.

When masculinity is viewed as a tenuously-held identity that requires consistent public demonstration around other men, it becomes important to recognize the impact that crucible events have in a man's life. These challenges help a man wrestle with his core existential question: “Am I good enough?”³¹ Affording men environments where they can be challenged, experience change, and form bonds of brotherhood, provides them with new lenses through which to view their engagement with the feminized church. These crucible events in a man's life provide him with the opportunity to test his masculinity and receive affirmation through male camaraderie that he is “one of us.”

²⁹ Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1978), 49.

³⁰ One concern is that the invigoration of passive men may evoke an exaggerated response. Recognizing that male reengagement is more complicated than simply unleashing hyper-masculinity thus becomes a helpful corrective. Neither polar extreme—passivity or hyper-masculinity—is appropriate. Without a regulator, an unleashed spirit can become aggressively destructive to the community, to families, and to individuals. Within church ministry this was exemplified in the immediate closure of Mars Hill upon Driscoll's dismissal.

³¹ This question is a composite of the core question posited by Larry Crabb (What should I do?), Richard Simmons (Am I good enough?), Meg Meeker (Am I good enough for my dad?), and John Eldridge (Do I have what it takes?).

What follows is an exploratory study of how crucible events, such as found in F3, may function as mechanisms for developing an authentic Biblical masculinity that catalyzes male participation in the church.

Thesis Structure

This work is based upon interdisciplinary research into psychology, anthropology, literary criticism and biblical theology. The primary argument that the precarious nature of masculinity requires public confirmation comes from Jennifer Bosson and Joseph Vandello's work. This is reinforced through Joseph Campbell's monomyth of the hero's quest and anthropologist David Gilmore's study of the cultural development of manhood. The second main argument about the male need for structure-changing experiences is based on Daniel Levinson adult male development theory, which builds upon Erik Erickson's childhood development theory. Finally, the work of Leon Podles called *The Impotent Church* and David Murrow's *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, establish the feminization and male disengagement from the church.

Drawing on the four steps for practical theology designed by Richard Osmer,³² this study seeks to address four questions aimed at describing, interpreting, gathering data about and analyzing the development of the masculine spirit through crucible events and their impact on a man's masculine archetype:

- Question 1: How is the masculine spirit threatened and rebuilt?
- Question 2: What are the archetypal forms of masculinity in Genesis 1-4?
- Question 3: What can be learned about men going through crucible events?
- Question 4: How can those events be used in the church to reengage male participation?

³² Richard Robert Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2011), 4.

Each of these questions forms a specific chapter addressing the hypothesis that men who embrace challenges alongside other men become less passive and hyper-masculine, thereby confirming their precarious masculinity, which in turn enables them to reengage with feminized environments.

The second chapter describes the theory of precarious masculinity; what happens to men when their masculinity is lost; and how challenges rebuild the masculinity identity. Once the threat to masculinity has been established and male reactions identified, the third chapter interprets these reactions from a biblical framework made up of three archetypal forms of masculinity as represented in Genesis 1-4. In light of these archetypal forms, the fourth and fifth chapters present the research methodology and assimilate the data. Results reveal the impact shared struggles have in bonding men and producing a non-threatened masculinity. Finally, the sixth chapter presents practical ways that the church can replicate these masculinity-forming environments, while acknowledging the limitations and the future research needed, due to the exploratory nature of this study.

In sum, this study examines the argument that if masculinity is hard won but easily lost, the church must consider ways to consistently call men to discipleship processes that challenge, change and connect them into the local church, so that they may find in Jesus Christ the answer to men's persistent question, "Am I good enough?"

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDING RESEARCH

“Are you a man?”
Lady MacBeth to MacBeth

— William Shakespeare, *MacBeth*

Precarious Masculinity

Man’s Persistent Question and Quest

The perennial existential question that men seek to answer is, “Am I good enough?” The ancient Greeks believed that “to be recognized as a man of worth one had to demonstrate a skill and excellence.”¹ When a man toes the starting line of a race, he wonders if he is good enough to cross the finish line. When he stands before his bride, he wonders if he is good enough to truly love her for better or worse. As he unpacks his boxes in his new workplace cubicle, he wonders if he is good enough to get promoted to the corner office. While cradling his newborn, he wonders if he is good enough to be this child’s provider and protector. As he contemplates his own mortality, he wonders if he is good enough to earn an entrance into heaven. These questions burn hotly in a man and initiate a quest in his life.

A man begins to search for purpose and meaning once his primary needs have been addressed. Once the means to meet basic biological needs—such as food and shelter—become more accessible, people generally experience an increase in existential wondering as they search for meaning in life.

¹ Donald G. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 7.

Abraham Maslow helped revolutionize psychology by focusing on the improvement patients could make by climbing a hierarchy of needs. They could move from their fundamental physiological needs (food, shelter, sleep) to growth-oriented needs of love and belonging. Once those primary needs are met, people are able to address matters of self-esteem, before finally exploring issues related to self-actualization (meaning and purpose). In other words, having satisfied Maslow's primary needs, a person is able to move up the pyramid to focus upon existential needs. Maslow called these primary needs "deficiency needs," because people are compelled to respond to those needs, but once met people are not motivated to continue their pursuit. However, Maslow believed it possible to "regress down the hierarchy in times of crisis."²

In their search for meaning, people often experience a disruption in their physiological and relational needs; this disruption helps in reorienting their perspective. They are taken back to their fundamental and growth-oriented needs in order to evaluate their lives, deconstruct areas that are dissatisfying and reconstruct new self-identities. Such disruptions are not rational, intellectual evaluations; instead they "involve emotional turmoil, despair, the sense of not knowing where to turn or of being stagnant and unable to move at all."³ These disruptions become crucible experiences.

Viktor Frankl's experiences in and reflections on surviving a Nazi concentration camp provide a dramatic perspective into a man's quest for influence and meaning in life when his primary needs are stripped from him. Frankl's life underscores the power of crucible events that

² Andrea Bonior and Alex Westgate, *Psychology: Essential Thinkers, Classic Theories, and How They Inform Your World* (Berkeley, CA: Zephyros Press, 2016), 147.

³ Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1978), 199.

cause a man to lose everything, returning him to the base of Maslow's pyramid and the need to construct a new self-identity.

In losing everything, one discovers what is essential and rebuilds from that new foundation. Frankl was stripped of his clothes in a shower in Auschwitz, given a number in place of his name, separated from his wife, and left desperately trying to cling on to his life's work by sewing a manuscript into his jacket. Ultimately, Frankl lost his family, his job, his identity, and his life work; yet through these horrendous conditions, he discovered that a future-oriented purpose, or "hope," is essential for a man's survival.

In contrast to Freudian psychology, which looks to the past, Frankl's logotherapy, which resulted from his experience in the concentration camps, is forward-looking: "striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in a man."⁴ He discovered the essential core of humanity, and then counseled others in this insight through an approach that sheds men of their external identities through crucible events, in order to reveal this essence. This discovery showed that meaning was not found in material acquisitions, but in a cause that orients one towards others: a greater purpose. Ultimately, Frankl writes, "The true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche...the more one forgets himself—by giving himself a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself."⁵ Therefore, as men "forget" themselves, they discover an orientation towards serving someone else.

⁴ Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006), 75.

⁵ Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning*, 111.

Joseph Campbell calls this descent down Maslow's hierarchy through crucible experiences and then back up again "the hero's quest," with the hero progressing through three distinct stages:

1. **Separation:** "Whether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration—a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which when complete, amounts to a dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand."⁶
2. **Ordeal:** "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials."⁷
3. **Reintegration:** "When the Hero-Quest has been accomplished...the adventurer must still return with his life-transmuting trophy."⁸

These ordeals, which are challenges the hero must overcome, become initiation rites that transform males from boys into men.

Similarly Belgian van Gennep, and later Victor Turner, developed three stages of liminal rites of passages: separation, transition and incorporation.⁹ Rather than be a singular event, van Gennep believes a man's life is repetition of these stages:

A man's life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginning: birth, social puberty, marriage fatherhood, advancement a higher class, occupational specialization and death. For everyone of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another...¹⁰

Therefore, these experiences become the male rite of passage, which corresponds with the hero's quest in Campbell's monomyth theory. Men separate from the feminine environment, overcome an obstacle and then return transformed and reoriented towards a greater purpose.

⁶ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008), 42-43.

⁷ Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 81.

⁸ Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 167.

⁹ Victor W. Turner, "Frame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 6, no. 4 (December 1979): 466.

¹⁰ Arnold van Gennep et al., *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 3.

This process begins in boyhood. By separating from the feminine influences in his life—his home and mother—a man removes the source for meeting many of his physiological and relational needs, as identified by Maslow. This removal initiates a transformative period within a boy's life as he begins to disassociate from his mother in order to develop his masculine identity.

Avoidance of femininity as a core component of masculine identity has a long history in psychology, tracing its roots back to psychoanalytic theories of gender development. According to these theories, a healthy (e.g., “normal”) masculine identity can only develop if boys sufficiently dis-identify with the female caregiver and the feminine qualities that she represents. Thus, manhood itself is defined, in part, by an aversion to femininity.¹¹

Pediatrician Meg Meeker notes this aversion begins in preadolescence, and she describes the tension that arises between mothers and sons:

When he enters preadolescence, he suddenly...gets a glimpse of his future as a man...in addition to physically maturing, trying to figure out who he is becoming and enduring the emotional shifts that hormonal changes bring, he struggles with his feelings toward his mother. He wants to stay close, but something inside him is pulling away from her. These changes are all part of the process of becoming a man.¹²

Furthermore, the nurture of the mother, the safety of a home and the comfort of a well-heeled life rarely afford a boy opportunities to test himself. Anthropologist David Gilmore writes,

An authentic femininity rarely involves tests or proofs of action, or confrontations with dangerous foes: win-or-lose contests dramatically played out on the public stage. Rather than a critical threshold passed by traumatic testing, an either/or condition, femininity is more often construed as a biological given that is culturally refined or augmented.¹³

¹¹ Jennifer K. Bosson and Joseph A. Vandello, “Hard Won and Easily Lost: A Review and Synthesis of Theory and Research on Precarious Manhood,” *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 14 (2013): 102.

¹² Margaret J. Meeker, *Strong Mothers, Strong Sons: Lessons Mothers Need to Raise Extraordinary Men* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2014), 81.

¹³ David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 12.

Unlike womanhood, which is usually bestowed biologically upon a young girl when she reaches puberty, manhood is something that has to be tested, demonstrated and proven: manhood is “not a natural condition that comes about spontaneously through biological maturation but rather is a precarious or artificial state that boys must win against powerful odds.”¹⁴ By disassociating from the feminine, the boy begins to earn his masculinity through testing and confrontation.

Since masculinity cannot be ascribed, but must be confirmed, the boy has to prove himself through an ordeal once he has been separated from feminine influences. Only upon the successful completion of that ordeal is he ready to return to the community and become reintegrated with the feminine.

Upon his return, he finds a new place within the community. As Patrick Arnold writes:

The final stage of the heroic initiation rites was return and reintegration into society. The village would mark the reappearance of their new men with a great celebration or feast; clothed or named anew, the young men won new respect. They were important now, they mattered. Now they were expected to join the hunt, learn how to defend the village, to rule the tribe, to pray on behalf of the people, and to heal the sick—to live lives of concrete and everyday heroism.¹⁵

These men discover that they are important to the community, thereby having value, purpose and meaning. As they reintegrate, they are ready to lead their communities more effectively, because the question of their meaning and value has been resolved.

Because Western society has seen dramatic decreases in opportunities for men to be tested, modern men lack threshold experiences that move them from boyhood into manhood. They also lack the daily tests—such as providing food and shelter—that would continually reaffirm their new found masculine identity. Os Guinness writes,

¹⁴ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 11.

¹⁵ Patrick M. Arnold, *Wildmen, Warriors, and Kings: Masculine Spirituality in the Bible* (New York: Crossroads, 1991), 43.

Fulfillment of the search for purpose is thwarted by a stunning fact: Out of more than a score of great civilizations in human history, modern Western civilization is the very first to have no agreed-on answer to the question of the purpose of life. Thus more ignorance, confusion-and longing-surround this topic now than at almost any time in history.¹⁶

Men are therefore left without mechanisms to address their existential question.

The untested man, without a persistent and confident response to the question burning hotly within him, will grow agitated and restless. The result will be either aggressive wandering, always “looking for a fight,” or passive disengagement. Both options result in a precarious masculinity that is hard to win and easy to lose.

Precarious Masculinity Defined

Bosson and Vandello’s research suggests that “manhood is a precarious social status that is hard won and easily lost, and that requires continual public demonstration of proof.”¹⁷

When asked how a person might lose manhood, college students generated more reason that reflected social themes (e.g. “unable to support a family,” “let someone down”) than physical themes (ex. “sex-change operation,” “became ill”). This pattern reveals that US college students perceive manhood, relative to womanhood, as an impermanent, socially conferred status that must be earned and can be lost.¹⁸

Masculinity is therefore a precarious social status, based upon three tenets:

1. it must be achieved;
2. it is tenuously held;
3. it is confirmed by others through public demonstrations of proof.¹⁹

¹⁶ Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 3-4.

¹⁷ Jennifer K. Bosson et al., “Precarious Manhood and Displays of Physical Aggression,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 35 (February 6, 2009): 623.

¹⁸ Jennifer K. Bosson and Joseph A. Vandello, “Precarious Manhood and its Links to Action and Aggression,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 20, no. 2 (April 2011): 83.

¹⁹ Bosson and Vandello, “Hard Won and Easily Lost,” 101.

Masculinity is thus constantly held in a precarious state requiring public confirmation upon the completion of arduous tasks. Precarious masculinity demands action, persistent testing and public confirmation.

Cross-Cultural Discussion

The precarious nature of masculinity is one of the main aspects of manhood that transcends cultural boundaries.²⁰ While Bosson and Vandello focus on men in the United States of America, Geert Hofstede has examined the continuum between masculinity and femininity extensively in a variety of countries. He has then been able to assign a score to that society based on its hegemonic form of masculinity. Hofstede's methodology confirms that masculinity is fluid and is a culturally-influenced construction. His definition also shows that masculine-feminine tension is cross-cultural, however:

A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.²¹

The higher the masculinity score, the greater the likelihood a dominant form of hyper-masculinity is that culture's hegemonic form of masculinity.²²

²⁰ Jennifer K. Bosson and Joseph A. Vandello, "Manhood, Womanhood, and the Importance of Context: A Reply to Commentaries," *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 14 (April 2013): 126.

²¹ Geert H. Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 104.

²² "The Masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented. In the business context Masculinity versus Femininity is sometimes also related to as 'tough versus tender' cultures."

Geert H. Hofstede, "Dimensions," *Geert-Hofstede.com*, accessed April 17, 2017, <https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>.

David Gilmore's work focuses upon specific cultures, such as the men of Andalusia, the Truk Islands, the Fox Tribe and !Kung Bushman, in order to capture the way the masculine continuum is displayed through violence, sex, materialism and ritual. Each tribe displays its masculinity uniquely, and produces its own rites of manhood. However, Gilmore writes, "whether 'hard' or 'soft,' manhood has to be validated, vindicated and defended in many societies."²³ While different images of gender ideals will be particularized within each culture, there therefore remain some underlying similarities regarding its precariousness and relation to the feminine. His work re-enforces Vandello's experiments, because, as Gilmore writes:

There is a constantly recurring notion that real manhood is different from simple anatomical maleness, that it is not a natural condition that comes about spontaneously through biological maturation but rather is a precarious or artificial state that boys must win against powerful odds. This recurrent notion that manhood is problematic, a critical threshold that boys must pass through testing, is found at all levels of sociocultural development regardless of what other alternative roles are recognized. It is found among the simplest hunters and fishermen, among peasants and sophisticated urbanized peoples; its found in all continents and environments. It is found among both warrior people and those who have never killed in anger.²⁴

Gilmore notes that these threshold tests are found in East Africa, England, the South Pacific, among American Indians and elsewhere.²⁵ Therefore, although Hofstede's scores rank these nations along a continuum between egalitarianism and separatism, they all have ritualistic methods of taking a boy from the safety of his home, testing him, and upon his return, accepting him into the community as a man.²⁶

²³ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 201.

²⁴ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 11.

²⁵ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 12-15.

²⁶ Gilmore uses the Truk Island group as an example of what happens when the community does not have an identifiable ritualistic process. This results in aggressive masculinity within adolescents as they seek methods to prove their burgeoning masculine identity. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 65-68.

The level, severity and method of the test depend on the culture, but these initiation rituals begin a process that continues throughout the different stages of a man's life. The Fox tribe espouses an egalitarian view of masculinity and femininity,²⁷ yet they still have rites of manhood. In fact, the Fox tribe of Iowa understand the challenge to continually demonstrate masculinity, because it does not end upon completion of an initiation ritual. Their egalitarianism increases the constant need for masculine demonstration. This therefore heightens the masculine threat for the individual and means that real manhood is a repetitive quest for the "Big Impossible."²⁸ Furthermore, Daniel Levinson highlights the fact that Greek, Chinese and Hebrew cultures all acknowledge a pattern of transitional periods in a man's life.²⁹

Gilmore notices that in Spain and the Truk Island group, there are no formal rites of passage, and that men therefore require daily demonstrations.³⁰ Due to their low rites of manhood, these men revert to informal hyper-aggressive displays. As a result, men in their twenties on Truk Island often succumb to turbulent periods of heavy drinking that result in violent fights. Gilmore notes this is similar to the machismo of Spain and Latin America.³¹ Without an established mechanism to test and confirm a man's masculinity, he will be left to find his own way. These become uncontrolled challenges that often endanger men and their communities.

In honor-bound cultures, the test centers on a man's honor: when a man's honor is forfeited, his manhood is also forfeited. In these cultures, the precarious nature of a man's

²⁷ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 15.

²⁸ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 15.

²⁹ Levinson, *Seasons of Man's Life*, 325-326.

³⁰ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 57.

³¹ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 58-59.

identity expands beyond his individual behavior to include the entire family. A man is rated “as less a man when his wife [is] unfaithful” no matter how faithful the man is. The core cultural belief is thus that “men must be vigilant in guarding and controlling the behavior of their wives, sisters and daughters...”³² The threat of familial shame is the ordeal that motivates a man to take responsibility for his entire family in order to publicly prove himself and not lose his masculinity.

One man told this researcher anecdotally that in Louisiana, “Masculinity is judged by how good a cook a man is. They sit around talking about smoked rabbit and whose gumbo is the best.” The method—cooking—is culturally informed, but the underlying precariousness of masculinity remains constant. In fact, what some cultures may identify as a feminine task becomes disassociated from the feminine within this Louisiana subculture so that these men can use their cooking skills as the means of answering their core question, “Am I good enough?” They have initiated a quest in order to compare themselves against other men. This allows them not only to outperform other men, but also to view themselves as effective producers and providers for their guests.

While the precariousness of masculinity transcends cultures, the model by which the “Big Impossible” is publicly tested and confirmed is culturally bound. In *The Men and the Boys*, R. W. Connell argues against a singular form of masculinity: “different cultures, and different periods of history, construct gender differently.”³³ However, by viewing masculinity as a cultural construct, he affirms the basic principle of precarious masculinity that it must be formed.

While the methods for establishing masculinity may be culturally-informed, the underlying notion that masculinity is precarious, tested through an ordeal that threatens

³² Bosson and Vandello, “Precarious Manhood and Its Links to Action and Aggression,” 84-85.

³³ Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 10.

masculine identity and is then publicly confirmed, crosses cultural boundaries. What men require, and what various cultures afford them, are threshold-crossing events that memorialize these tests. Cultures that lack these rituals exacerbate the precariousness of a man's masculine identity, furthering his concern if he is good enough.

In *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, Robert Lewis notes that the lack of ceremonial processes in post-industrial, upper-middle class western society has removed a central method of addressing the "Big Impossible." For Lewis, ceremonial initiation rituals are "precisely what American sons are missing...[because these events] mark the passages from adolescence to manhood. Boys need manhood ceremonies that will live on in their memory."³⁴ Without these initiation rites cemented into a young boy's life, he will lack the experiences to draw upon when he faces future threats that will satisfy, even if only momentarily, the Big Impossible question "Am I good enough?"³⁵

The removal of initiation rights within a culture means that there are no longer "threshold events" symbolically moving a young man into a place of responsibility. Anthropologist Lionel Tiger notes that this is an unintended consequence of the feminist movement. He argues that feminism eliminates male-only environments that test and then ascribe responsibility to the man. In this way men are "liberated" from a meaningful existence:

If liberation means the absence of unavoidable irrefutable obligation, women's liberation has backfired. It is men who have been liberated. They needn't be husbands or fathers to assure themselves of social status. They can be ex-

³⁴ Robert Lewis, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight: A Father's Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 102.

³⁵ In *The Old Man and the Sea*, Ernest Hemingway illustrates the need for men to draw upon previous crucible experiences. When the old man first catches a glimpse of the giant marlin he is battling, he also knows his strength is starting to falter, and has to recall an epic arm wrestling match where he became Santiago El Campeon in order to endure his crucible. Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (New York, NY: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1995), 24-25.

husbands or part-time fathers. They are not required to support women and children for life. They may experience transient social and sexual variety with a range of partners.³⁶

Tiger notes that without the push to strive towards social responsibility and public demonstration of their masculinity, this liberation allows men to disengage culturally through three large-scale behavioral responses: sports, pornography and drugs.³⁷ These become escape routes through which the male soul disengages into passive observation, rather than active participation. In a post-industrial, post-feminist culture, men therefore not only lack initiation rituals, but also lack culturally-dominant and positive forms of masculinity that call them into active responsibility. The result is that they lose their masculinity.

Loss of Masculinity

While the preceding research regarding initiation rituals shows that masculinity is hard-won through public demonstrations, it also reveals that masculinity is easily lost. Simple tasks, like braiding hair, cause men to gamble or punch more aggressively. Also, if their income lags behind that of their wives, they will not participate in domestic chores or attend church. When men feel the threat of emasculation they respond through two extremes: either they passively avoid situations that threaten their masculinity, or they respond hyper-aggressively.

Pierre Mornell writes that as men are “increasingly impotent, literally and figuratively... they silently retreat behind newspapers, magazines, television and highballs in the home. Or perhaps not-so-silently retreat into affairs, weeknight appointments and weekend arrangements outside the house.”³⁸ When their masculinity is threatened, men fall along a continuum between

³⁶ Lionel Tiger, *The Decline of Males: The First Look at an Unexpected New World for Men and Women* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 2000), 184.

³⁷ Tiger, *The Decline of Males*, 197.

³⁸ Pierre Mornell, *Passive Men, Wild Women* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1987), 2.

the polarities of passivity and hyper-masculinity. These polarities can be seen in response to challenges such as parenting, sex, money, and work.³⁹

Table 1. Struggles Men Face

Passivity	Struggles Men Face	Hyper-masculinity
pornography	sex	promiscuity
debt	money	gambling
countdown to pay day	job	serial quitter
spectator	sports	cutthroat
avoidance	conflict	assault
suicidal	violence	homicidal
absent	family	abusive
laissez-faire	leadership	totalitarian

Response: Passivity

The main character of Steve Martin's *The Pleasure of My Own Company* articulates the internal struggle to "be a man" when he reflects that his love-obsession, Clarissa, will not be impressed by him. Afraid of being viewed as an aggressive male, he realizes his tendency is to default towards passivity: "At least Clarissa knows I am benign. But that is not an adjective one wants to throw around about one's spouse, 'this is my husband, he's benign'."⁴⁰ This benign passivity fails to affirm a man's longing to know he is good enough.

The most common response men make to the threat of the feminine is to become passive. Their passivity is demonstrated through avoiding and neglecting responsibilities, while also isolating themselves. Stephen B. Clark believes that "men have a natural tendency to avoid social

³⁹ Note that men may at different times or in different situations be on different sides of this continuum. This suggests not a singular and dominant form, but a fluidity within masculinity, which can result in a sense of insecurity and shame for a man, because of his uncertainty.

⁴⁰ Steve Martin, *The Pleasure of My Company* (New York, NY: Hachette Books, 2004), 79.

responsibility.”⁴¹ A man’s passivity begins to influence how he engages with his relationships, vocation, physical health, and community and spiritual life.

In their avoidance, men lack an internal drive. As Ruth Simpson found, men who work in female-dominated occupations, often fall into a category she calls “settlers.” These are men who try different masculine jobs with little satisfaction, and therefore settle for what they perceive to be feminine jobs with little interest in promotion or career development.⁴² By settling, they lack the desire to strive and overcome this emasculating threat.

If men are threatened, they will also neglect their duties to care for others. Sapna Cheryan notes that, “men who earn less money than their wives—and thus are not fulfilling a traditional masculine role—are less likely to share housework duties than men who are primary breadwinners.”⁴³ While it would seem that these men feel the desire to serve the family in another capacity, the fact that their masculinity had been compromised due to their lagging income means they will neglect their domestic duties. They have to neglect these responsibilities because otherwise they will compound their feelings of inadequacy.

Avoiding feelings of inadequacy becomes the passive man’s defense. This tactic allows him to live with an inflated, but untested form of masculinity. His masculine identity may appear secure, but only because it has not been tested. In order not to lose it, he will revert to a safer position under pressure. For example:

⁴¹ Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1980), 639.

⁴² Ruth Simpson, “Masculinity at Work: The Experiences of Men in Female Dominated Occupations,” *Work, Employment and Society* 18 (June): 355.

⁴³ Sapna Cheryan et al., “Manning Up: Threatened Men Compensate by Disavowing Feminine Preferences and Embracing Masculine Attributes,” *Social Psychology* 46, no. 4 (August 2015): 8.

Although Manuel is intensely competitive, he avoids competition since losing is experienced as an unbearable humiliation. Manuel's self-esteem depends on maintaining an inflated and grandiose evaluation of his intellectual power...when he does compete and loses, Manuel acts out by withholding... [He] regresses to the safer, feminine position with other men...he adopts a somewhat submissive and dependent stance.⁴⁴

Over time, continued failures exacerbate a man's passivity. Martin Seligman notices that "when we fail at something, we all become helpless and depressed at least momentarily. We do not initiate voluntary actions as quickly as we would otherwise, or we may not try at all. If we do try, we will not persist."⁴⁵ A state of "learned helplessness" emerges if men are not given areas in which to be tested and succeed. This state of helplessness furthers the man's avoidant tendencies and isolationism.

This helplessness results not only in inaction, but also in communal disengagement. While both action and community are necessary to confirm a man's precarious masculinity, the passive male lacks both. Since masculinity has to separate from the feminine, it is even more critical to have connection to a male community to confirm self-identity. Otherwise men become imprisoned in their own isolation. There needs to be "an escape from the prison of self in which all human beings are locked, but which afflicts men even more deeply because they flee from the connectedness of the feminine world..."⁴⁶ Imprisoned in himself, the result is an isolated, passive man who neglects his responsibilities.

⁴⁴ Lucia Imbesi, "When the Father Is Passive: His Impact on the Development of Masculinity," *Journal of Analytic Social Work* 4, no. 4 (1997): 5.

⁴⁵ Martin E. P. Seligman, *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* (New York, NY: Vintage, 2006), 137.

⁴⁶ Leon Podles, *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity* (Dallas, TX: Spence, 1999), 207.

In *The Sopranos*, Tony Soprano describes himself as a “sad-clown.” He tells his counselor that he “has to be the sad clown: laughing on the outside, crying on the inside.”⁴⁷ The founders of F3 coined this term to effectively describe the passive archetype. Within F3,⁴⁸ a Sad-Clown is a man who,

Goes through the motions of life in the manner in which he perceives is expected of him from the culture rather than in the manner for which he was created. Having no real purpose in life (other than existential continuity), he lives for little else than to be told at his deathbed that his last check has cleared. He can usually be identified by inconsistent fitness (he cyclically gains and loses the same 40 pounds), loneliness (he lacks true meaningful male friends) and lack of purpose (he has no idea why he does the things he does).⁴⁹

The sad-clown is the picture of a passive man who may appear happy on the outside, but has a deep, unfulfilled inward longing. These men fail to embrace even the initial step of the hero’s quest, namely to actively and assertively separate from the feminine. In contrast is the other extreme, the hyper-masculine male who fails to complete the quest by reintegrating with a community.

Response: Hyper-Masculinity

The second form of masculinity—hyper-masculinity—embraces the agentic separation of the male from the feminine. However, hyper-masculine men fail to complete the hero’s quest by not becoming reintegrated into the community. The boy separates from his mother in order to return prepared to unite with a new feminine partner—his wife.

Hyper-masculine men fail to reintegrate because of a divisive egoism that separates them from others. “The complete pattern of masculinity contains both the escape from the feminine

⁴⁷ David Chase, “Pilot,” *The Sopranos* (HBO, January 10, 1999).

⁴⁸ F3 is described in detail at the end of this chapter. F3 is a peer-lead, all-male workout community that seeks to reinvigorate male community leadership.

⁴⁹ “Lexicon,” *F3nation.com*, accessed Jan 13, 2017 at <http://www.f3nation.com/lexicon>.

and the return to it. The hyper-masculinity, which sees only the initial rejection and escape, ends in nihilism...”⁵⁰ Threatened by emasculation, only the lust for personal power and privilege remains in this form of hyper-masculinity. The hyper-masculine man never returns to the feminine. Sara Lipton has noticed that contemporary idolization of youthfulness allows males to remain in their boyhood states of insecurity, rather than reintegrate towards confident manhood.

It was once thought that the command of one’s emotions and impulses was a hallmark of manhood. Lipton argues that in previous generations, rampant sexuality was viewed as a feminine trait, and therefore masculinity was displayed through self-mastery and restraint:

For most of Western history, the primary and most valued characteristic of manhood was self-mastery. Late antique and Roman writers, like Plutarch, lauded men for their ability to resist sexual temptation and control bodily desire through force of will and intellect. Too much sex was thought to weaken men...rampant sexuality was something men were supposed to grow out of...a man who indulged in excessive eating, drinking, sleeping or sex—who failed to “rule himself”—was considered unfit to rule his household, much less a polity.⁵¹

John Piper writes that “the popular Playboy platitudes of our generation falsely preach that the most masculine attribute is unrestrained intercourse.”⁵² Previously, masculinity was demonstrated not through aggressive sexuality but impulse control and self-restraint.

Aristotle wrote that “anyone can get angry—that is easy...but to [get angry with] the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, for the right reason, and in the right way is no longer something easy that anyone can do...”⁵³ Restrained anger was once a virtue, but unrestrained anger results when a man fails to overcome the perceived threats he faces.

⁵⁰ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 191.

⁵¹ Sara Lipton, “Those Manly Men of Yore,” *The New York Times*, June 16, 2011, accessed January 13, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/17/opinion/17lipton.html>.

⁵² John Piper and Wayne A Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 308.

⁵³ Aristotle as quoted in U.S. Army, *Army Leadership FM 6-22* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Red Bike Publishing, 2010), 6-4.

For example, the literature about domestic violence points to “links between threatened masculinity and increased husband-to-wife abuse...occupational stressors—such as demotion, job loss, and trouble with superiors—consistently emerge as predictors of men’s violence toward their female partners.”⁵⁴ Furthermore,

men who participated in aggressive sports were more hostile towards women, more likely to engage in physical aggression, and sexual coercion toward their romantic partners, more physically aggressive in general, more accepting of violence, less accepting of homosexuality, and more tolerant of rape myths than men who did not.⁵⁵

This observation shows that within hyper-masculinity there is an alignment of aggressive, violent and sexually-focused behaviors. In his study of the rape culture on college campuses, Jon Krakauer notes the intertwining of aggression and egoism: Men who commit sexual assault “are more narcissistic than average. So they are caught up in their own worldview. They lack the ability to see what they do from the perspective of their victims...none of the undetected rapists [identified in Lisak’s] research considered themselves as rapists.”⁵⁶

Without the personal drive or cultural expectation that an adolescent male will complete his hero’s quest by reintegrating into a community in order to work for a purpose outside of himself, he is allowed to live in this hyper-masculine worldview of unrestrained, impulsive and aggressive anger. What emerges is a divisive, impulsive and egotistical masculinity.

⁵⁴ Jennifer K. Bosson et al., “Precarious Manhood and Displays of Physical Aggression,” 631.

⁵⁵ Bo M. Winegard, Ben Winegard, and David C. Geary, “Eastwood’s Brawn and Einstein’s Brain: An Evolutionary Account of Dominance, Prestige, and Precarious Manhood,” *Review of General Psychology* 18, no. 1 (March 2014): 41.

⁵⁶ Jon Krakauer, *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2015), 132.

These aggressive reactions often result when men perceive themselves to have lost their masculinity. Unlike passive men, who fail by not participating, these men feel the need to over-compensate due their perceived failures.

Men who receive feedback that they scored low on a measure of masculinity or who participated in a feminine activity were more likely to display aggressiveness, harass female interaction partners, and derogate other non-masculine men. These findings suggest that men compensate for a masculine threat by presenting themselves as more stereotypically masculine, in particular by displaying physical evidence of masculinity.⁵⁷

Driven by narcissism, the hyper-masculine male becomes egotistically divisive. Like the passive male, the hyper-masculine male is also individualistic; however his individualism takes the form of an egotistical individualism. Such stereotypes of hyper-sexuality, isolating individualism, indiscriminate violence and aimless wandering are portrayed culturally in fictional characters such as James Bond, Jason Bourne and Jack Reacher.

Aaron James, a professor in philosophy at the University of California-Irvine, effectively depicts this hyper-masculine male in his work entitled *Assholes: A Theory*. He explores what is meant when someone is labeled an “asshole.” The theory is that an asshole is a man who enjoys special advantages out of a sense of entitlement that immunizes him against others’ complaints.

[An asshole] sees no need to wait for special circumstances to come his way in the normal course of things. The asshole feels entitled to allow himself special advantages as he pleases systematically and across a wide range of social interactions. He cuts in line, and interrupts often and drives without particular care and persistently highlights people’s flaws.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Cheryan, “Manning Up,” 2.

⁵⁸ James, *Assholes: A Theory*, 15.

James goes on to note that “asshole” is a predominantly male term.⁵⁹ In James’ view, an asshole is aggressively narcissistic, lacks self-restraint, and is self-focused to the exclusion of others.⁶⁰ The immaturity of an asshole reveals that they, like their passive counterparts, have also not completed the hero’s quest, because “many assholes are overgrown teenagers who never faced up to the morality of disregarding others in any general or conscious way.”⁶¹

Table 2. Characteristics and Cultural Archetypes

Passivity	characteristic	Hyper-Masculinity
Avoidant		Impulsive
Negligent		Aggressive
Isolating Individualism		Divisive Individualism
Sad-Clown	Cultural Archetype	Asshole

Loss of Male Friendships and Fathers

While the sad-clown fails to act and lacks purpose, the asshole fails to reintegrate into a community to serve others. Unleashing men upon a hero’s quest without a robust male community to reconstruct his male-identity is just as counter-productive as not unleashing a man. Both result in shame and male isolation.

The existential threat makes a man wonder if he is good enough. As he encounters failure and disappointment, he begins to feel shame. Gershen Kaufman notes that “whenever an

⁵⁹ James, *Assholes: A Theory*, 88.

⁶⁰ Aaron James uses Donald Trump as an example. In an August 2016 article for *The Atlantic*, entitled “Trump is the Climax of America’s Masculinity,” James Hamlin describes Trump showing traits that this research has associated with hyper-masculinity: vitriol, narcissism, division, entitlement, sexual assault, and so on. In closing, Hamlin writes that this “brand of masculinity becomes toxic and feeds tribalism and violence and entitlement among his followers—those who prefer fighting to talking, walls to bridges, grimaces to smiles.”

James Hamlin, “Trump Is a Climax of American Masculinity,” *The Atlantic*, August 8, 2016, accessed February 23, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/08/trump-masculinity-problem/494582>.

⁶¹ James, *Assholes: A Theory*, 116.

individual's fundamental expectations are suddenly exposed as wrong, shame is activated.

Whenever expectations are thwarted or disappointed, shame is also activated.”⁶² Whether he responds with passivity towards the threat or hyper-masculinity against it, the result is a sense of shame. Shame becomes a wall between men, which is the final way men can easily lose their masculinity.

Shame prevents men from addressing the third tenet of precarious masculinity, which “is confirmed by others through public demonstrations of proof.”⁶³ Larry Crabb found that three out of four men do not have “a peer with whom they felt no shame.”⁶⁴ Without male friendships to provide communal confirmation of their hard-won masculine identity, men hide from each other through passive disengagement or by masking their failures through hyper-masculine posturing. Rather than embracing challenges as opportunities to mature, Kindlon and Thompson notice that the more pressure a boy feels, the more deeply he withdraws.⁶⁵ By withdrawing from meaningful friendships, the man fails to receive the communal confirmation necessary to restore his masculine identity.

Lisa Wade argues that the hidden crisis for American men is their lack of friendships.⁶⁶ Furthermore, a study has found that married men have the fewest friendships.⁶⁷ Within the

⁶² Gershen Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes* (New York, NY: Springer, 1996), 30.

⁶³ Joseph Vandellos and Jennifer Bosson, “Hard Won and Easily Lost,” 101.

⁶⁴ Larry Crabb, Don Hudson, and Al Andrews, *The Silence of Adam: Becoming Men of Courage in a World of Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 160.

⁶⁵ Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson, *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2000), 142.

⁶⁶ Lisa Wade, “American Men’s Hidden Crisis: They Need More Friends!,” *Salon*, accessed February 24, 2017, http://www.salon.com/2013/12/08/american_mens_hidden_crisis_they_need_more_friends.

⁶⁷ Sarah Knapton, “Marriage Is More Beneficial for Men than Women, Study Shows,” *The Telegraph*, June 11, 2015, sec. 2016, accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2016/03/14/marriage-is-more-beneficial-for-men-than-women-study-shows/>.

United Kingdom, over 2.5 million males claim to lack any true friend.⁶⁸ Men who are without a single friend to call upon if there is a crisis in the middle of the night are less physically healthy.⁶⁹ A 2015 study found people who are lonely, isolated or living alone see a greater risk of premature death.⁷⁰ Mike Lanza argues that “what the wealthy feel they are buying is privacy and the ability to be choosy about whom they socialize with.”⁷¹ Thus, once a man turns twenty-five, the number of relational points of contact in his life begin to fade.⁷² All that remain for many men, as Carol Emslie notes, are drinking friends. “Drinking pints of beer together in the pubs [is] an integral part of making and maintaining male friendships in midlife.”⁷³ This data suggests that wealthy, Western, middle-aged, married men are the least likely to have meaningful friendships beyond drinking alcohol together.

Not only is the loss of male-peer friendships detrimental to men’s well-being, but so is the loss of father figures. The father figure is the most influential man in a boy’s life to help develop his masculine identity. If the father is absent or passive, the boy will have a difficult time valuing and developing his masculinity identity. The “quality of fathering the boy receives is the most crucial factor in the boy’s positive development of masculinity.”⁷⁴

⁶⁸ John Bingham, “2.5 Million Men ‘Have No Close Friends,’” *The Telegraph* (November 14, 2015), accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/active/mens-health/11996473/2.5-million-men-have-no-close-friends.html>.

⁶⁹ Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 174.

⁷⁰ Billy Baker, “The Biggest Threat Facing Middle-Age Men Isn’t Smoking or Obesity. It’s Loneliness,” *Boston Globe*, last modified March 9, 2017, accessed March 13, 2017, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2017/03/09/the-biggest-threat-facing-middle-age-men-isn-smoking-obesity-loneliness/k6saC9FnnHQCUBf5mJ8okL/story.html>.

⁷¹ Melanie Thornstrom, “The Anti-Helicopter Parent’s Plea: Let Kids Play,” *The New York Times Magazine*, October 23, 2016, 45.

⁷² Kunal Bhattacharya et al., “Sex Differences in Social Focus across the Life Cycle in Humans,” *Royal Society Open Science* 3, no. 4 (April 1, 2016): 7.

⁷³ Carol Emslie, Kate Hunt, and Antonia Lyons, “The Role of Alcohol in Forging and Maintaining Friendships amongst Scottish Men in Midlife,” *Health Psychology* 32, no. 1 (2013): 36.

⁷⁴ Imbesi, “When the Father is Passive,” 7.

Lucia Imbesi notes that for imitation and transfer of masculinity to a son there must be an affectionate bond with the father.⁷⁵ Male isolationism and divisiveness begins to have a generational impact, because a “boy needs male modeling of a rich emotional life...a boy must see and believe that emotions belong in the life of man.”⁷⁶ Since men lack their own masculine identity, fathers often feel ill-equipped to guide their sons into manhood. Without an actively engaged father-figure demonstrating a rich emotional life, boys will become imitative of the mother, or become the next generation of passive men.

John Rosemond has noticed a shift away from fatherly-discipline that focuses on behavior, towards motherly parenting that focuses solely on emotions: “Instead of modeling traditional masculine virtues, [fathers] are acting more and more like second mothers to their children.”⁷⁷ Imbesi’s study found that fathers who are present, but passive, are more detrimental than absent fathers. Sons will also not imitate fathers who are punitive and restrictive (hyper-masculine) when they have a low-level of affection towards their sons.⁷⁸

Therefore, “a warm relationship with a father who is secure in his masculinity is a crucial factor in the boy’s masculine development.”⁷⁹ In order to develop a masculine identity, boys need fathers who provide both “limit-setting”—are active and engaged—and “nurturance”—are non-dominant and non-aggressive.⁸⁰ Without fathers demonstrating the precarious balance between passivity and hyper-masculinity, these boys will grow into imitative mothers, passive observers,

⁷⁵ Imbesi, “When the Father is Passive,” 13.

⁷⁶ Kindlon and Thompson, *Raising Cain*, 7.

⁷⁷ John K Rosemond, *Parenting by the Book: Biblical Wisdom for Raising Your Child* (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2007), 110.

⁷⁸ Imbesi, “When the Father is Passive,” 13.

⁷⁹ Henry B. Biller, Father, *Child and Sex Role: Paternal Determinants of Personality Development* (Lexington, MA: Heath Lexington Books, 1971), 33.

⁸⁰ Imbesi, “When the Father is Passive,” 13-4.

or absent biological fathers. Without male friendships or effective father-figures, men lack an essential support system to guide them through the communal reintegration with the feminine, such as is found in the local church.

Male Engagement with the Feminized Church

For men, the church only highlights the precarious nature of their masculinity. Many men feel that there are no longer opportunities for heroics or challenges associated with the local church, just tasks involving nurture, care and love. Since masculinity is constantly under threat of emasculation, and men lack male-friendships, participating in feminized environments compounds these threats for a man. As a result, men who participate in the church tend to become effeminate or react aggressively.

When men are in the minority, they respond by isolating themselves socially or with heightened differentiation from their feminine counterparts.⁸¹ Sonja Sobiraj has found that men working in female-dominated occupations, where men are less than twenty percent, experience greater psychological strain and depressive moods.⁸² While male participation in most churches is greater than this threshold, men in the egalitarian church can experience the same “contradictory social demands” of their male gender role and feminized environments. Therefore, either they differentiate through patriarchal para-church ministries or accept an emasculated role.

⁸¹ E Joel Heikes, “When Men Are The Minority: The Case of Men in Nursing,” *Sociological Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (1991): 392.

⁸² Sonja Sobiraj et al., “Masculinity Ideology and Psychological Strain: Considering Men’s Social Stressors in Female-Dominated Occupations,” *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 16, no. 1 (2015): 54-5.

For example, even though most clergy are men, they are often viewed by other men as “part of the safe world of women.”⁸³ As one man puts it, “life is a football game, with the men fighting it out on the gridiron, while the minister is up in the grandstand explaining it to the ladies.”⁸⁴ This view of the pastorate causes men to find their pastors as irrelevant to their lives.

If men feel they are battling the existential pressures of life, they will avoid arenas, such as the local church, that exacerbate the threats. One study found that men “who have been unemployed in the last ten years are also less likely to attend church services than their employed counterparts.”⁸⁵ This is because the “loss of employment may raise men’s doubts about their gender status.”⁸⁶ With a threatened masculinity, men avoid environments that exacerbate these threats. The male avoidance of church has, however, been a long-term concern within the church.

Leon Podles’ work highlights the Middle Ages as a time when the church began to embrace a feminized spirituality that necessitated a masculine response. In the *Church Impotent*, Podles chronicles the problem of men viewing the church as a “women’s club.”⁸⁷ For Podles, it is the theological shifts of the Middle Ages, a time when the church began to emphasize a femininity incompatible with masculinity, that has caused the disengagement of men. The church’s embrace of bridal imagery, veneration of Mary, the Sacred Heart, universalism, and unity domesticated the Christian faith. Pew Research Center has found that globally “Christian women are more religious than Christian men” based upon their commitment, “including

⁸³ Podles, *Church Impotent*, 5.

⁸⁴ Podles, *Church Impotent*, 5.

⁸⁵ Bosson, et al, “Precarious Manhood and Displays of Physical Aggression,” 624.

⁸⁶ Kenneth S. Michniewicz, Joseph A. Vandello, and Jennifer K. Bosson, “Men’s (Mis)Perceptions of the Gender Threatening Consequences of Unemployment,” *Sex Roles* 70, no. 3–4 (February 2014): 88.

⁸⁷ Podles, *Church Impotent*, ix.

religious affiliation, frequency of worship service attendance, frequency of prayer, and whether religion plays an important role in a person's life.”⁸⁸

The domestication of the church has led to persistent attempts to reengage men. Joseph Gelfer identifies three waves of men's ministries after the Second Great Awakening:

Contemporary men's ministries comprise what might be called a “third wave” of Muscular Christianity. The first wave gained momentum in the late 1800s and early 1900s and “can be defined simply as a Christian commitment to health and manliness.” The second wave took hold after World War II, with special reference to Christian sporting activities. The third wave began in the late 1970s—starting with the establishment by Ed Cole of the Christian Men's Network—and saw the creation of what we now know as “men's ministries.”⁸⁹

Even after these men's ministries attempted to attract men, they failed to reintroduce men into churches. As David Murrow describes,

[T]he typical American churchgoer is a woman. The U.S. Congregational Life Survey pegged her as a fifty-year-old, married, well-educated, employed female...[while] a study by Barna Research estimate a weekly gender gap of more than 13 million in America's churches...The U.S. Congregational Life survey concurs: ‘while the U.S. population is split fairly evenly between men and women there are more women (61%) than men (39%) in the pews...[also] today 20 to 25 percent of America's married, churchgoing women regularly attend without their husbands.’⁹⁰

Murrow concludes that “these numbers suggest the gender gap and church decline go hand in hand. Mainline denominations such as Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Christ, and Episcopal have been hemorrhaging members for decades, and they are also very likely to be short on men.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Conrad Hackett, “The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World,” *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, last modified March 22, 2016, accessed April 5, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/03/22/the-gender-gap-in-religion-around-the-world>.

⁸⁹ Joseph Gelfer, “Meat and Masculinity in Men's Ministries,” *The Journal of Men's Studies* 21, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 78.

⁹⁰ David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 53.

⁹¹ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 55.

While Murrow does not examine their leadership structures, all of the denominations listed with declining male engagement are egalitarian. The prevailing gender gap is thus more noticeable within the egalitarian church: 80 percent of Episcopal churches report a gender gap.⁹² When women are able to become leaders in the local church, the male spirit is further threatened and the gender gap increases. These numbers place men in the minority, which means they will isolate themselves or develop an alternative. Often the alternative is a hyper-masculine muscular Christianity.

Also, the men who remain part of the egalitarian church are rarely tested, which can result in a divisive hyper-masculinity: “‘Assumed authority effect’ means men will often not be challenged within the feminized spheres, thereby allowing their opinions and decisions not to receive the scrutiny necessary to strengthen their expertise, argumentation, etc.”⁹³ As a result, men who are engaged in the feminine church have limited opportunities to be tested and corrected.

Attempts to Re-engage the Masculine Spirit

In her article “The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912,” Gail Bederman focuses on one Protestant effort to revitalize and re-masculinize the church through an embrace of the emerging consumer culture. She believes male disengagement from the local church coincided with the emerging capitalist economy. As the middle-class came into existence in America, people moved beyond a focus on their basic needs, as suggested by Maslow, and into

⁹² Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 55.

⁹³ Simpson, “Masculinity at Work: The Experiences of Men in Female Dominated Occupations,” 358.

managing higher order desires.⁹⁴ This led to an increased divide between morality and productivity. Similarly, morality came to be viewed as a domestic and feminine virtue, while productivity was seen as a public and masculine trait. The “ladylike” voices of high morality, self-denial, and thrift became “increasing irrelevant values in a corporate, consumer society.”⁹⁵ As a result, the church’s moral emphasis was identified as feminine and began to further erode male engagement.

Seeing the need to reengage men, the “Men and Religion Forward” movement of the early twentieth century closed the perceived gap between the opposition of morality (femininity) and productivity (masculinity), by embracing sports, advertisements, and quasi-militaristic groups as vehicles to engage men in religious training. The movement also attempted to use Protestant intellectualism and logic in the proclamation of the Gospel, rather than the emotionalism of the nineteenth century.

Around this time Harry Emerson Fosdick published *The Manhood of the Master*, which sought to portray the character of Jesus in masculine terms and thereby provide an applicable comparison between Jesus’s characteristics and those of the male reader.⁹⁶ Through these efforts there was a temporary increase in male engagement with the church as reflected in the 1926 census: “Urban, middle-class adherents had gained even more new men. For example, the

⁹⁴ R.W. Connell highlights the influence social class has upon masculinity. Working-class men are laboring for a wage to live on. He differentiates this from men who are capital-class men whose income comes from benefits or pensions. Working-class men are highly dependent on their earnings and “form any working-class people, then the realities of life centre on economic vulnerabilities and constraints.” Therefore, this research is referencing men who are in the upper-middle class or white-collar employment because their work is more career oriented than wage.

Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 104-5.

⁹⁵ Gail Bederman, “‘The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough’: The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism,” *American Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1989): 437.

⁹⁶ Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Manhood of the Master* (New York, NY: Association Press, 1913), 9.

proportion of men in Congregational churches grew by 10.9 percent. In the Northern Presbyterian (USA) churches, male membership was up by 11.2 percent. The proportion of Episcopalian men grew by a whopping 20.8 percent.”⁹⁷ By embracing a masculine tone in their methodology, the “Men and Religion Forward” movement was able to increase male participation in the local church. In the end, though, the impact of the revitalization did not return the 3,000,000 missing men it targeted.

The 1920s resurgence did lead to a generation of males engaged in the local church. Podles highlights the fact that the 1950s experienced the social health and engagement of the American father: “The father of the 1950s was the most family-involved father of American history and probably one of the most family-involved fathers in any modern culture. Religious practice, not coincidentally, also was at a peak in the 1950s.”⁹⁸ These initial efforts to engage the masculine spirit not only impacted the individual, but also had societal influence. Left untended, the male tendency towards passivity reemerged however, as males once again disengaged from the church. Since masculinity is consistently threatened, the momentum gained was easily lost over the next generation.

David Murrow’s 2005 study notes that while 62 percent of Americans possess a passive personality, that figure climbs to 85 percent within the church.⁹⁹ The impact is that “any institution so heavily tilted toward passive personalities will itself become passive. It will tend to value tradition and stability over innovation and growth.”¹⁰⁰ This means that new initiatives need to follow the model of the “Men and Religion Forward” movement, by organizing first either in

⁹⁷ Bederman, “The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough,” 454.

⁹⁸ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 161.

⁹⁹ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 70-71.

¹⁰⁰ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 71.

para-church organizations—like the Promise Keepers of the 1990s—or through innovative church plants. By starting outside the walls of the feminized church, there is a better chance of engaging the male spirit. Yet while these may be effective environments to initiate male reengagement, without a reintegration with the feminine, they are not sustainable. “The long-range success of Promise Keepers, is however, not assured. Revivalist attempts to reach men may have some initial success, but they [flounder] in their attempts to develop stable commitments. Men may be attracted by the crisis atmosphere, but they discover it is impossible to live day to day in a crisis.”¹⁰¹ The instability of hyper-masculine Christianity, without reintegration with the stabilizing force of the feminine, was demonstrated in the rise and then collapse of Marc Driscoll and Mars Hill Church.

The Failure of Muscular Christianity

In 1996, Mark Driscoll launched Mars Hill Church and became an exemplar for pastors attempting to revitalize male commitment to the church. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* by Stephen Prothero identified Driscoll’s ministry as a modern example of hyper-masculinity within the church.

Prothero acknowledged that America has a long history of “preachers delivering, in the hope that a rough-hewn Jesus would draw men back to the pews.”¹⁰² Driscoll became a prototype of this hyper-masculine modern movement. In an article in *Christianity Today*, Brandon O’Brien describes Driscoll’s position as follows:

¹⁰¹ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 162.

¹⁰² Stephen Prothero, “A Cage-Fighting Christ for Our Time: Updating American Tradition by Calling for a More Macho Redeemer,” *The Wall Street Journal*, last modified December 12, 2013, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304073204579167963887805686>.

“Real men” avoid the church because it projects a “Richard Simmons, hippie, queer Christ” that “is no one to live for [and] is no one to die for.” Driscoll explains, “Jesus was not a long-haired . . . effeminate-looking dude”; rather, he had “callused hands and big biceps.” This is the sort of Christ men are drawn to—what Driscoll calls “Ultimate Fighting Jesus.”¹⁰³

Through his brashness in preaching and ministry, Driscoll sought to force a masculine identity on the effeminate church. However, as O’Brien prophetically described it, this form of hyper-masculinity swung too far. Driscoll’s subsequent implosion was the result of a divisive anger that permeated the organization. As Elizabeth Bruenig reported:

Driscoll’s proposed corrective of a more macho Christianity seems ill-fated. And it seems now that it did not portend well even for Driscoll, whose demise had much to do with his bullyish and coercive style of administration and with the leak of a disgustingly vitriolic rant against women, feminism, gay men, and others. Accusations of Driscoll’s abuses of power and bullying levied by twenty-one former Mars Hill pastors pursuant to an internal investigation include several distinctly gendered infractions.¹⁰⁴

Driscoll thus tried to fit Jesus into a distorted misunderstanding of masculinity that was divisive, antagonistic and angry.

Another recent effort called “God Man” attempted to scrub worship of anything feminine and deliberately built on testosterone-laden imagery, sound and language. Aesthetically, musically, and topically, the gathering was geared toward men with a special focus on sexuality. Demonstrating the aggressive and sexualized focus, one song they sang in worship was entitled “Grow a Pair,” and included the lyrics:

Welcome to the battle
A million men have got your back
Jump up in the saddle
Grab a sword, don’t be scared

¹⁰³ Brandon O’Brien, “A Jesus for Real Men : What the New Masculinity Movement Gets Right and Wrong,” *Christianity Today* (April 1, 2008), 48.

¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Bruenig, “The Failure of Macho Christianity,” *The New Republic*, Feb 24, 2015, 6.

Be a man, grow a pair!¹⁰⁵

With a hollow definition of masculinity reduced to simply not being female, these modern movements lack a firm foundation that allows men to complete the hero's quest by reintegrating with the feminine; they are merely reactionary anti-femininity. This hyper-masculinity is highly volatile, because every feminine word, image or idea then becomes a threat, which is just as corrosive to the church as male disengagement.

In order to function in an egalitarian leadership structure, the masculine spirit must not be reactionary or anti-feminine. O'Brien argues that "if Adam and Eve illustrate the essential differences between men and women, Christ highlights their essential unity."¹⁰⁶ Therefore, while men have disengaged from the church, caution is needed to ensure that ministries do not take on a hyper-masculine identity that destroys this unity.

By noting the historicity and modernity of these reforms in the local church, we can see that masculinity is not only precariously threatened in individuals, but also within organizations such as local churches. Because of the feminization of the local church, men have persistently dissociated from the church, thereby exacerbating the problem. Dissociation means men lose a communal environment in which to engage, challenge and confirm a holistic form of manhood. Men therefore need a process and community with which to rebuild their masculine identity so that they may be prepared to reintegrate with the feminine in unthreatened confidence.

¹⁰⁵ Eileen Finan, "Real Men Talk About God: A New Christian Movement Lets Guys Be Guys," *Newsweek*, October 30, 2006.

¹⁰⁶ O'Brien, "A Jesus for Real Men," 51.

Rebuilding Masculine Identity

In order to rebuild their masculine identity, men need to undergo Campbell's hero's quest. After separating from their familiar domestic life, they need to experience an intentional crucible in order to develop a new positive masculine identity that facilitates reintegration into the community.

These crucible events provide a training ground for men to develop self-awareness. However, the precarious nature of masculinity means that men—but not women—describe “‘a real man’ with more fleeting actions than enduring adjectives...men define their own gender status in terms of the active things men do.”¹⁰⁷ The hands-on nature of physical crucibles is therefore effective, because crucibles create positive learning environments that cross over into real life experiences and provide the tools for developing an accurate self-perception.¹⁰⁸ The self-perceptions that are generated by these experiences allow men to rebuild their masculinity with an enduring description of their manhood and an active mechanism for restoring that manhood.

Table 3. Characteristics and Cultural Examples

Archetype	Passive Masculinity	Hyper-Masculinity	Purposeful Masculinity
Cultural Examples	Sad Clown	Asshole	Hero
Characteristics	Avoidant	Impulsive	Obediently Active
	Negligent	Aggressive	Servant Motivated
	Isolating Individualism	Divisive Individualism	Communally Committed

¹⁰⁷ Bosson and Vandello, “Precarious Manhood and Its Links to Action and Aggression,” 83.

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Army, *Army Leadership FM 6-22* (Huntsville, AL: Red Bike Publishing, 2010), 8-8 & 8-10.

Importance of a Positive Masculinity

In light of the fluidity of masculinity in a post-industrial, post-feminist, post-Christendom Western society, the formation of specific culturally-bound demonstrations of a positive archetype becomes essential. Boys are told to “man up,” faltering athletes are chastised to “C’m on man,”¹⁰⁹ and men who are assailed are told to “take it like man.” There lacks, however, a concrete understanding of what it means to be a man. By not having a positive model of masculinity to compare themselves against, men lack an effective understanding of masculinity.¹¹⁰ Masculinity needs to be more than anti-femininity.

Without a positive form of masculinity within a culture, all that men are left with are models of passivity or hyper-masculinity. As psychologists Kindlon and Thompson note, without this positive form of masculinity to strive for, “a confused young boy grows into an angry, emotionally-isolated teenager, and predictably into a lonely, middle-aged man at risk for depression.”¹¹¹ Masculinity cannot be formed in isolation, but only through contact with other men. Patrick Morley notices that “men’s lives are changed as they rub up against other men’s lives.”¹¹² The form of masculinity men come into contact with determines its impact.

¹⁰⁹ “C’m on man!” is a sketch on ESPN’s Monday Night Football, where the announcers publicly criticize the behavior and attitude of athletes.

¹¹⁰ The result of not developing a positive form of masculinity is a persistent deconstruction of masculinity. Duke University recently launched “Duke’s Men Project” within the Women’s Center. The goal is for male students to “critique and analyze their own masculinity and toxic masculinities to create healthier ones...So that men could ‘proactively deconstruct [their] masculinity’.”

Celina Ticoll-Ramirez, “‘Deconstructing Masculinity’: Duke Men’s Project Aims to Facilitate Discussions of Male Privilege and Patriarchy,” *The Chronicle*, last modified September 26, 2016, accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2016/09/deconstructing-masculinity-duke-mens-project-aims-to-facilitate-discussions-of-male-privilege-and-patriarchy>.

¹¹¹ Kindlon and Thompson, *Raising Cain*, 7.

¹¹² Patrick Morley, “Reaching the Disconnected Male : How to Move Men on the Fringe into Active, Focused Discipleship,” *Leadership* (Winter 2001): 78.

By combining the concept of precarious masculinity from psychology with David Gilmore's anthropological study of the "Big Impossible," and Joseph Campbell's literary analysis of the hero's quest, a third and purposeful masculinity emerges. When these three characteristics of purposeful masculinity are defined as *obedient action* which is *servant-motivated* within a *committed community*, a man is given a positive form of masculinity against which to measure himself. These three characteristics give him an ideal to strive for through crucible experiences.

Robert Lewis defines purposeful manhood as men who "reject passivity," "take responsibility" and "lead courageously."¹¹³ Masculinity is thus the active rejection of the passive with a summons towards social responsibility.

The first characteristic is that masculinity is agentic. Rather than being biologically bestowed, masculinity, is behavioral and contains a "primacy of work."¹¹⁴ Since masculinity must be "achieved," it requires action.¹¹⁵ This is not indiscriminate action, however, but intentional action that aligns with a specific goal. Therefore, it is action that is obedient towards the objective articulated in the call. The goal is secondary. What is essential is the primacy of obedient action; to remain inactive is to refuse the call.

Joseph Campbell writes: "Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in boredom...the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his

¹¹³ Lewis, *Raising a Modern Day Knight*, 51-57.

¹¹⁴ James R. Mahalik et al., "Development of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory," *Psychology of Men* (2003): 18.

¹¹⁵ This is the first tenet of precarious masculinity.

life feels meaningless.”¹¹⁶ Without obedient action to the call, the man never begins the hero’s quest for meaningful responsibility.

The second characteristic is that masculinity is socially responsible. By ignoring his call to social responsibility, a man reverts to his preadolescent state of boyhood. Gilmore makes the following observations about the Mediterranean basin:

The worker’s reputation as a citizen and a man is closely lined up with clearly defined service to family. A man who shirks these obligations renounces his claim to both respectability and manhood; he becomes a despised less-than-man, a wastrel, a *gamberro*. The latter term means an irresponsible reprobate who acts like a carefree child or who lives parasitically off women.¹¹⁷

The motivation of one’s actions—namely to serve others—therefore, becomes essential. The wrong motivation will also erode a man’s purpose: “A man who leaves his wife with the children and the bills to go and find another, easier life has denied them his strength. He has sacrificed them when he should have sacrificed his strength for them. What makes Maximus or William Wallace so heroic is simply this: They are willing to die to set others free.”¹¹⁸

The third characteristic is that it is courageously committed. Ultimately, the hero ideal is a servant who risks himself for the benefit of another. This is why the third tenet of precarious masculinity is also necessary.¹¹⁹ It requires a community that confers the man’s masculine identity and benefits from it and thus the final stage of the hero’s quest requires reintegration:

When the Hero-Quest has been accomplished...the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy...the norm of the monomyth requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity, where the

¹¹⁶ Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 49.

¹¹⁷ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 43.

¹¹⁸ John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man’s Soul* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 2001), 186.

¹¹⁹ The third tenet is that the masculine needs to be publicly confirmed.

boon may be redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds. But the responsibility has been frequently refused...¹²⁰

Without a commitment to communal responsibility, the hero retreats further into isolation.

Purposeful masculinity, as exemplified through the hero ideal, is found in a man who responds with active obedience to a call, in order to serve and provide for those under his care and thereby renew an entire community. Crucibles become the training grounds for this masculinity to be tested and developed.

Crucibles

Inevitability of Crucible Events

Daniel Levinson notes that the larger ordeals tend to occur in a rather predictable pattern during different stages of a man's life, which he calls the "Seasons of a Man's Life." Levinson notices that the twenties and thirties are the most formative and stressful decades of the life cycle.¹²¹ The basis of Levinson's argument is that men go through relatively rhythmic patterns of stasis and change:

[T]he life structure evolves through a relatively orderly sequence during the adult years...[I]t consists of a series of alternating stable (structure-building) periods and transitional (structure-changing) periods...a stable period ordinary lasts six or seven years, ten at the most. For various reasons, internal and external, the life structure that has formed the basis for stability comes into question and must be modified...[T]he primary tasks of every transitional period are to question and reappraise the existing structure, to explore various possibilities for change in self and world, and move toward commitment to the crucial choices that form the basis for a new life structure...these periods ordinary last four to five years.¹²²

¹²⁰ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 167.

¹²¹ Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, 337.

¹²² Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. 49.

In other words, whether self-initiated or externally induced, men will go through seasons of transition every decade of their lives in order to assess and redirect their life course. These efforts will force men to become aware of, examine, and then address unresolved wishes and anxieties.¹²³

He presents the stages and major tasks as follows:

Table 4. Stages of Man's Life

Stage	Age	Task
Childhood & Adolescence	3-17	
Early Adult Transition	17-22	Leaving the pre-adult world Deciding what to retain and drop from family of origin
Early Adulthood (23-42)		
The Novice Phase	23-27	Forming a "dream" Starting an occupation Building love relationship(s) Establishing mentor relationship
Age Thirty Transition	28-32	Evaluating emerging relationships and responsibilities Keeping what aligns with dream Discarding what is unsatisfactory
Becoming One's Own Man	33-37	Establishing a niche Working for advancement Building a family
Mid-Life (Age 40) Transition	38-42	Experiencing a culminating event Reappraising of the past Determining whether to revert back or push forward
Middle Adulthood (43-60)		
Settling Down	43-47	Making crucial choices Advancing, declining or breaking out his life structure Experiencing tension of polarities (young/old, dream/reality) Developing sense of mortality while retaining wish for immortality
Late Adulthood Transition	48-52	Considering his legacy Knowing his of limitations and his power
Leaving a Mark	53-60	Working to integrate his life's work Fearing that the youth within is dying
Late Adulthood	60+	Experiencing one major illness or impairment Undergoing a full appraisal of his life Making peace with dying"

¹²³ Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, 146.

Levinson notices that men need to go through regular and repeated seasons of challenge and stability in order to reassess life's trajectories and then continue building their life structures. During early adulthood, men are trying to establish themselves by differentiating themselves from their families of origin, becoming a novice in order to develop careers and establish a marital relationship. As Pierre Mornell describes it, "As a young father, he spends his time providing food, shelter and security for his family. Survival depends on him."¹²⁴ He feels the pressure to "become his own man" by creating his place in this world through work, marriage and family.

Entering the mid-life transition stage, most men have established their careers, often their marriages and families are also in place.¹²⁵ As the family grows and stabilizes, Mornell notices a role reversal where the man no longer confronts the threats of early adulthood. Therefore, "men begin to live out their passivity, which was earlier repressed for the sake of defense."¹²⁶ They had a reason—Maslow's basic needs—to be actively engaged.

By the end of this stage they have accomplished that goal of providing and forming relationships, yet something seems lacking. While these life achievements and accomplishments appear positive, Levinson noticed that "often, a man who has accomplished his goals comes to

¹²⁴ Mornell, *Passive Men, Wild Women*, 16.

¹²⁵ Kindlon and Thompson suggest that this is not only a pivotal stage for a man, but also a highly influential stage for the next generation—his son/s. As a man approaches his mid to late forties, many sons are also approaching puberty. This establishes a traditional conflict between the father and son. The son is starting to express and demonstrate his emerging masculinity, while a father is feeling the effects of aging. If a father disengages from his son in this season, he demonstrates to the next generation a passive form of masculinity. In contrast, as Kindlon relates, sometimes the father will snap during playful wrestling matches and express violent aggression to his rival—his son—as he tries desperately to retain his masculinity. Kindlon and Thompson, *Raising Cain*, 109-110.

¹²⁶ Mornell, *Passive Men, Wild Women*, 16.

feel trapped: his success is meaningless and he is now caught within a stultifying situation.”¹²⁷

Like a system in stasis, these men need something to disrupt them.

Rather than trying to avoid these disruptions, men can embrace them as effective tools to restore their masculinity. The disruptions give them an opportunity to develop their manhood. Jennifer Bosson states that “the most effective strategies for proving or restoring manhood are those that (a) involve risk taking (which signifies fearlessness), (b) are difficult (and thus hard or costly to fake), and (c) are public and thus visible to others.”¹²⁸ Therefore, offering tasks that are public, difficult and risky during these stages of stability will help a man rebuild his masculine identity. Such disruptions are effective in allowing the man to discover, assess and redirect his life’s trajectory without having to experience crisis level ordeals. These disruptions come in the forms of crucible events.

Crucibles as Transformative Events

Too often men view leisure as the ultimate epitome of a successful life. Yet leisure fails to provide men the meaning and purpose necessary for the masculine heart to survive. While crucible events produce a temporary and liminal suffering, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi notes they also produce happiness if the man struggles well: “Happiness comes when we have a specific goal and are engaged in meeting that goal. If we lose sight of the goal, we drift back to boredom. If the goal is too big and unattainable, we give up. We are at our best when we are in that zone between anxiety and boredom.”¹²⁹ This means that effective disruptions must fall between boredom and anxiety provoking.

¹²⁷ Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man’s Life*, 31.

¹²⁸ Elizabeth Bruenig, “The Failure of Macho Christianity,” 5.

¹²⁹ Bob Buford, *Stuck in Halftime: Reinventing Your One and Only Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 34.

Disruptions that are “calculated adversities” become places where men can experience catalytic transformation.¹³⁰ These adversities create planned and unplanned change. Bruce Avolio labels these “calculated adversities” as “catalyzing agents promoting change and transformation.”¹³¹ These catalyzing events are intentional crucibles. Therefore, effective crucibles place men between the zones of boredom and giving up, producing mechanisms for self-assessment and personal transformation.¹³² The result is that these intentional crucibles become catalysts within a man’s life.

These intentional crucibles create what Robert Quinn calls “bounded instability.” The crucibles push men out of stasis and into action in order that new perspectives might emerge. While destabilizing, these events must avoid chaos, however:

[A] system can move far from equilibrium but not all the way to chaos. Such a system has a boundary or structure, but within the structure there is a good deal of instability: *Bounded Instability*—that is instability with specific limits—[it] introduces new elements into the system, providing for new direction and growth.¹³³

These crucible events must be bounded so that the man might emerge confident and hopeful.

While they must unsettle, they should not destroy. They become training grounds for the man so that he is ready for unexpected challenges.

¹³⁰ A catalyst is defined as “a substance that speeds up chemical reactions by lowering the activation energy required for the reaction to occur.” The argument that crucibles catalyze male transformation therefore means that they help to expedite God’s transformations.

Theodore L. Brown et al., “Chemistry: The Central Science,” in *Chemistry: The Central Science*, 13th ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2015)

¹³¹ Bruce J. Avolio, “Examining Leadership and Organizational Behavior Across the Boundaries of Science,” *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 66 (December 2014): 290.

¹³² Ben Lupton, “Maintaining Masculinity: Men Who Do ‘Women’s Work’,” *British Journal of Management* 11 (September 2000): 34.

¹³³ Robert E Quinn, *Change The World: How Ordinary People Can Achieve Extraordinary Results* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 149.

As Martin Seligman notes in his work on learned helplessness, training oneself to overcome obstacles allows a person to be better prepared to address unexpected obstacles and resist passivity. In Seligman's groundbreaking studies, when a dog feels trapped and helpless, it becomes passive and docile. If the dog has previously experienced success, it will be active in overcoming future obstacles. Dogs that are shocked without an ability to escape do not attempt future escapes, even when a way out is easily discernible. However, if a dog is trained ahead of time that what it does matters, then it is less likely to fall into states of helplessness.¹³⁴ Passivity results from helplessness, therefore the successful accomplishment of completing an intentional crucible matters, because a man is able to test and discover that his beliefs about overcoming adversity will determine the outcomes. This means that when unplanned crucibles occur, men who have overcome previous obstacles are prepared to address those adversities from a confident belief system.

Robert Thomas notes that these conquerable crucibles become learning experiences, because the participant has to recognize the tension causing the challenge, reframe the crucible as something manageable, and resolve the tension constructively.¹³⁵ This produces resiliency for future crucibles, because the man can draw on these successes when other crucibles become overwhelming. As men change their mental response to this adversity, they are able to cope with future setbacks much better.¹³⁶ Both negative and positive challenges become learning mechanisms.

¹³⁴ Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 28.

¹³⁵ Robert J. Thomas, *Crucibles of Leadership: How to Learn from Experience to Become a Great Leader* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2008), 47.

¹³⁶ Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 233.

Annick Janson has studied how formative experiences can become leadership development processes. In his article he notes as follows:

Avolio and Luthans contend that successful leaders build strength by tilting the balance between negative and positive moments that life presents to them whether planned or unplanned. Based on the principle that developing strengths is a more potent and productive approach than remediating weaknesses, they choose to emphasize positive “trigger events” to understand leadership development in their research. Trigger events are events that could either appear important or negligible at the time but when seen in retrospect, the insights they brought upon us surface an important learning value.¹³⁷

Crucibles, like trigger events, allow a man to uncover his masculine identity and successfully accomplish a goal so that he no longer feels helpless, inadequate or overwhelmed.

If he is unable to accomplish the goal, these challenges become destructive and damage a man’s masculine identity. Therefore, “the disruption must not be toxic, that is, disruptions must be challenging but not overwhelming...”¹³⁸ If they are overwhelming, the man will respond with his natural propensity towards passivity or hyper-masculinity. While Seligman’s dogs give up when they feel helpless, he also warns that when the cost of failure is high, one should not seek to disturb the system through fool-hearted, aggressive decisions: “If the cost of failure is high, optimism is the wrong strategy. The pilot in the cockpit deciding whether to de-ice the plane one more time, the party-goer deciding to drive home after drinking, the frustrated spouse deciding whether to start an affair...”¹³⁹ In the high cost of failure situations, action will not disturb, but will instead destroy the system. It is therefore essential to manage the crucibles in ways that push men towards improved strength, emotional resilience and optimistic belief systems, without

¹³⁷ Annick Janson, “Extracting Leadership Knowledge from Formative Experiences,” *Leadership* 4, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 77.

¹³⁸ Quinn, *Change the World*, 163.

¹³⁹ Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 209.

either inescapable failure or a high-cost to their failure. To minimize the high-cost of failure, the crucibles need to be attempted prior to the major structure-changing stages Levinson identifies. If he is already under threat, action can overload the man.

However, if crucibles occur during the more stable structure-building stages, they will expose areas of weakness, build emotional resiliency, and prepare a man for future challenges. The United States Army understands the importance of using crucibles during stable periods, because they not only motivate men, but also expose capabilities and limitations in a safe and controlled environment: “It is important to keep [men] motivated with demanding assignments and missions...in order to...learn as much as possible about others’ capabilities and limitations.”¹⁴⁰ These crucibles become positive mechanisms for assessment, resiliency, confidence and community bonding.

Intentional Crucibles

Western culture typically seeks to minimize threatening events.¹⁴¹ As Mark Divine states, “Most people shy away from challenges of an extreme nature, and that is understandable given the level of comfort and wealth we are used to in Western Society.”¹⁴² However, by doing so, men are denied the opportunity to experience the growth and development that comes in confronting challenges: “All mammals engage in dangerous play...dangerous play is how kids learn how to titrate fear...[because] at some point in our lives, we will all be in stressful

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Army, *Army Leadership: Field Manual 6-22*, 1-13.

¹⁴¹ The decrease in men entering military service is an example. “Less than 0.5 percent of the population serves in the armed forces, compared with more than 12 percent during World War II...”

Karl W. Eikenberry and David M. Kennedy, “Americans and Their Military, Drifting Apart,” *The New York Times*, May 26, 2013, accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/27/opinion/americans-and-their-military-drifting-apart.html>.

¹⁴² Mark Divine, *The Way of the Seal: Think Like an Elite Warrior to Lead and Succeed* (New York: Reader’s Digest, 2013), 79.

situations and we need to be able to keep our cool.”¹⁴³ Culturally, western society has limited not only children, but also men, from experiencing the benefits of “dangerous play.” By removing stressful experiences and avoiding “dangerous play,” men lack opportunities to confront and address fears.

Since external threats of survival are of minimal concern in western culture, most men have been stripped of the physical, psychological, and emotional benefits of struggles.¹⁴⁴ Food is easily accessible; shelter is readily securable. Divine argues that “the keys to satisfaction, excitement, joy and more lie on the other side of a great challenge. [Since] the industrial age brought about material prosperity and eliminated a list of natural challenges life used to deliver...new stories and models of thinking are required to rebalance us.”¹⁴⁵ Without the daily struggle of survival, men no longer have external motivations that demand the rejection of passivity and the tempering of hyper-masculinity.

New models that are intrinsically motivating are therefore needed to expose a man’s tendency towards passivity or hyper-masculinity and develop a purposeful masculinity. It is through these methods that men will expose and confront their masculine identities: “Masculinities become highly visible when they [are] under challenge...”¹⁴⁶ These challenges produce a temporary instability, but eventually they lead to a rebalancing.

As one Navy Seal discovered, the benefits of grueling crucibles are that they provide strength when confronting the unexpected: “What stuck with me most from my experience was

¹⁴³ Melanie Thernstrom, “The Anti-Helicopter Parent’s Plea: Let Kids Play,” 47.

¹⁴⁴ Mornell, *Passive Men, Wild Women*, 19-21.

¹⁴⁵ Divine, *The Way of the Seal*, 79.

¹⁴⁶ Lupton, “Maintaining Masculinity: Men who do Women’s Work,” 34.

how my training kicked in, allowing me to perform under extremely stressful situations.”¹⁴⁷ This Seal discovered that his training not only improved him physically, but also provided emotional resources to meet future stress producers.

Counselors have also noted that emotional resiliency formed through prior experiences will determine if a person will overcome adversity: “The difference between boys who overcome adversity and those who surrender to it always comes down to the emotional resources they bring to the challenge.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore, not only do these crucibles produce physical strength and emotional resilience, but also they can generate a confident belief system that will persist through future obstacles:

In psychology, this belief is called self-efficacy. Even when the mission seems impossible, it is the strength of our belief that makes success possible. The absence of this belief guarantees failure. A strong belief in the mission fuels our ability to focus, put forth effort and persist. Believing allows us to see the goal and break the goal down into more manageable objectives.¹⁴⁹

The beliefs people carry about themselves when they confront adversity will thus determine the outcome, as Martin Seligman states.¹⁵⁰ This places a heightened value on a man overcoming some adversity prior to entering a season of transition, so that he may believe adversity is conquerable. The “reality of our first major loss shapes how we think about the causes of future losses...[in] his early losses and traumas if [the threat] remits, he will develop the theory that bad events can be changed and conquered.”¹⁵¹ Intentional challenges that rebuild a man’s masculine identity will thus help catalyze the transformative experiences in his life.

¹⁴⁷ Divine, *Way of the Seal*, 31.

¹⁴⁸ Kindlon and Thompson, *Raising Cain*, 19.

¹⁴⁹ Howard E Wasdin and Stephen Templin, *SEAL Team Six: Memoirs of an Elite Navy Seal Sniper* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2011), 72.

¹⁵⁰ Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 211.

¹⁵¹ Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 134-5.

Power of Physical Crucibles

By intentionally disturbing the body physically, crucibles have the ability to open new possibilities for the entire body. While it was Platonic thought that divided the physical from the spiritual, a biblical understanding would be that the body, mind and spirit are fused together, which means a holistic transformation can be initiated through physical crucibles.

Diane Chandler has developed seven dimensions for Christian spiritual formation. She writes:

In Genesis 1-3 we can trace the foundations of all seven dimensions. The formation of Adam and Eve, created in the image of God as integrated beings, entails a physical body, spiritual endowment, emotions, relational capacity, intelligence, vocational propensity for work....God created Adam and Eve by infusing them with an integrated holistic capability.¹⁵²

Since humans are integrated, physical challenges have the capacity to influence the entire self, which is made up of emotional, relational, vocational and spiritual dimensions.

Therein lies the power of physical crucibles, because they go deeper than physical tests. The efficacy of physical challenges transfer to the spiritual, relational, emotional, and vocational realms. Joseph Firth found that exercise, even without weight-loss, has positive benefits of significantly reducing symptoms of mental disorders such as depression and schizophrenia.¹⁵³

William Goodman noticed that unemployed men, if they exercise daily, experience a decrease in

¹⁵² The crucible categories used later in this work reduce Chandler's seven categories to five, and are adapted from the "Pastoral Covenant Groups Working Paper," by Jim Singleton for the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. These categories are physical, relational, vocational, spiritual and emotional. Diane J. Chandler, *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Intervarsity Press, 2014), 31.

¹⁵³ Angela S. Alberga et al., "Effects of Aerobic Training, Resistance Training, or Both on Psychological Health in Adolescents with Obesity: The HEARTY Randomized Controlled Trial," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 83 (December 2015): 1134.

their depressive symptom scores.¹⁵⁴ In a review of the cognitive benefits of exercise, Michelle Voss states that aerobic and resistance training is one of the most effective methods for improving cognitive ability without the side effects of pharmacological treatments.¹⁵⁵ Relationally, physical activity “can be viewed as a vehicle for the development of prosocial behavior.”¹⁵⁶ Even people with physical disabilities are encouraged to discover appropriate forms of physical activity. Jeffrey Martin’s research argues that physical activity is even more important for people with disabilities because they are overall more inactive, thereby missing the physiological, emotional, cognitive and social benefits of physical activity.¹⁵⁷ There are thus physical, psychological and relational benefits to regular physical challenges.

In the course of his research into adventure therapy, David Scheinfeld discovered that men have an affinity for coming together through shared physical activity, and that “sharing emotions without assistive activities can be unproductive for some men.”¹⁵⁸ He therefore recommends adventure trips as mechanisms for group therapy because “the long trekking allows you to open up verbally whenever you are ready.” Not only does this create opportunities to process issues, but also fosters an interdependence among the group.

¹⁵⁴ William K. Goodman, Ashley M. Geiger, and Jutta M. Wolf, “Differential Links between Leisure Activities and Depressive Symptoms in Unemployed Individuals,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 72, no. 1 (January 2016): 75.

¹⁵⁵ M. W. Voss et al., “Exercise, Brain, and Cognition across the Life Span,” *Journal of Applied Physiology* 111, no. 5 (November 1, 2011): 1510.

¹⁵⁶ Stuart Biddle, “Exercise and Psychosocial Health,” *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 66 (May 1995): 295.

¹⁵⁷ Jeffrey J. Martin, “Benefits and Barriers to Physical Activity for Individuals with Disabilities: A Social-Relational Model of Disability Perspective,” *Disability and Rehabilitation: An International, Multidisciplinary Journal* 35, no. 24 (December 2013): 2030.

¹⁵⁸ David E. Scheinfeld, Aaron B. Rochlen, and Sam J. Buser, “Adventure Therapy: A Supplementary Group Therapy Approach for Men,” *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 12, no. 2 (April 2011): 191.

The physical challenge becomes a catalyzing test that not only produces tangible results, including better endurance, strength, and health improvements, but also inspires holistic changes. This is the reason Navy Seals are initiated through a notoriously grueling week called Hell Week: “Hell Week was not a fitness test, every student that survived the weeks of BUDs training prior to Hell Week had already demonstrated adequate fitness to graduate. It was not a physical test but a mental one...success resulted from determination and will, but also innovation and communication with the team.”¹⁵⁹ What the Navy Seals noticed is that under the guise of a physical challenge, Hell Week actually challenges men emotionally (their determination and will), mentally (innovative problem solving) and relationally (communication and teamwork). The physical crucible becomes the launching point for a holistic disruption within each soldier.

Mark Divine has formed a leadership process from his Navy Seal training that seeks to cross-train people physically, mentally, emotionally, intuitionally and spiritually. He describes the reason he initially focused on physical training: “It’s the easiest to see and feel progress, or lack there of...[it helps] break through physical barriers and limitations, which forges a channel to other [areas] in the process. Additionally, physical training helps you develop control over your body and makes it a stable, healthy and a powerful platform for your entire life.”¹⁶⁰

By taking on physical challenges first, a steady foundation emerges within a man that allows him to push himself in other arenas. This foundation provides physical strength, emotional

¹⁵⁹ “BUDs” training is the initial stage in the Navy Seal’s preparation course. It is a two-month training that constantly tests a recruit physically. To complete the training men have to meet minimum standards in a 1000 meter swim, pushups, pull-ups, sit-ups and a four mile run.

Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy Seals Lead and Win* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2015), 42.

¹⁶⁰ Divine, *The Way of the Seal*, 191.

confidence, and an optimistic belief system that his masculinity is no longer threatened, but is being rebuilt.

Through these physical crucibles, a man is able to assess and rebuild Maslow's pyramid while confronting the existential question of whether he is good enough. These crucibles cause men to see themselves and their relation to the world differently. Overcoming an intentional physical crucible will catalyze a man's transformation to become an action-oriented person who rejects passivity and leads courageously. Mark Divine retells the experience of one client who underwent this transformation. To overcome his passivity, the man embraced an intentional physical crucible that initiated a process of holistic transformation:

It can be scary to take on a new challenge, and your fears can get in the way. Once, I took a group of executives on a challenge trip to New Mexico. During the last evolution of the day, which was a 100-foot rappel off a cliff overlooking the Rio Grande, I discovered one executive had an extreme fear of heights. "Ed, just focus on your breathing and take it one step at a time," I told him. Skeptically, he lowered down the rock face, then panicked and flipped upside down. Though he wasn't in any real danger, fear overwhelmed him, and he began screaming for help. It took every ounce of self-restraint to stop from rescuing him, but I knew the only way for him to learn from this situation was for him to right himself.

I shouted to Ed, "Stop screaming! Focus and get control of yourself. Breathe deeply and close your eyes." My words shocked him into a focused state. He did as I instructed and started to regain control. "Now hold onto the rope, get your feet onto the wall, and push off," I coached from below, praying he could maintain his composure and avoid hurting himself unnecessarily...Fortunately, I was able to help Ed realize that he was the master of his own fate; he finally followed my instructions, righting himself easily. I lowered him the rest of the way down and gave him a big hug.

On the ground and glad to be alive, Ed was euphoric but still a bit in shock. I understood that he was very receptive to learning, so I drove home the lesson...and praised his efforts to face his fear, take control and break through. Later at the dinner celebration, we all toasted his accomplishment. I never saw Ed again, but a year later I followed up with the team leader who hired me for the

job. He told me that Ed had lost a lot of weight, gotten into better physical shape, and was much more confident at work. His boss had even promoted him.¹⁶¹

While this story highlights the cumulative impact tackling an intentional, controlled and physical challenge can have on a man's masculine identity, it also reveals another aspect necessary to rebuilding that identity: the power of community. Ed succeeded because he had a coach and a community watching him turn his life around.

Power of Male Community

Since one of the tenets of precarious masculinity is that it has to be demonstrated publicly, it would appear that intentional physical crucibles do not produce the same effect in isolation. This is because men need a community around them to confirm their masculine identity.

Moreover, they need the intimacy forged through shared experiences:

A researcher from Britain's University of Oxford presented study results that most guys understand intuitively: Men need an activity together to make and keep a bond. Women can maintain friendships over the phone...[Men] need to go through something together. That's why, studies have shown, men tend to make their deepest friends through periods of intense engagement, like school or military service or sports. That's how many of us are comfortable. [Psychiatrist] Richard Schwartz...noticed a trend in photographs taken of people interacting. When female friends are talking to each other, they do it face to face. But guys stand side by side, looking out at the world together.¹⁶²

Podles believes that "what is lacking in the West is a language of intimacy that expresses the closeness that men feel with men."¹⁶³ In *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis describes this type of intimacy as friends that stand side by side, rather than face to face like lovers.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Divine, *The Way of the Seal*, 76-7.

¹⁶² Billy Baker, "The Biggest Threat Facing Middle-Age Men Isn't Smoking or Obesity. It's Loneliness."

¹⁶³ Podles, *The Impotent Church*, 119.

¹⁶⁴ C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York, NY: Mariner Books, 2012), 63.

In standing side by side, men are connected through activity. In *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, Daniel Levinson comments that as men move through their life stages they need different forms of male relationships to steady the transition periods. He classifies these in terms of familial relationships, such as peers, elder sibling, parent and grandparent.¹⁶⁵ Peers are within six years of each other and are at the same life transition stage. Elder siblings are a stage ahead, ranging from eight to fifteen years older. Parents are twenty to forty years older, and grandparents are two generations removed at more than forty years older. This means men need to be actively placed, working shoulder to shoulder within an intergenerational community of men.

As Larry Crabb puts it in the *Silence of Adam*, “We continue to walk the path to maturity when we admit how deeply we long for a father, a man who walks ahead of us, letting us know what is possible and calling us to follow, and a brother, a peer whose struggles and compassion encourage us to make ourselves known to him as we walk together.”¹⁶⁶

Men need two types of male friendship:

Table 5. Forms of Male Friendships

Elders	Father-figures	model how to do things believe in them
Comrades	Brother-figures	share secrets navigate obstacles together

Men therefore need uniquely male environments to forge these types of relationships so that they can combat the precarious nature of their masculinity. In doing so they reclaim the meaning of *ecclesia* and *koinonia*. This prepares them for confident reintegration into the local church.

¹⁶⁵ Levinson, *The Seasons of Man's Life*, 27.

¹⁶⁶ Crabb, *The Silence of Adam: Becoming Men of Courage in a World of Chaos*, 145-166.

Reintroducing a Positive Masculinity to the Church

By reemphasizing the importance of conversion, struggle and “brotherly love,” this purposeful masculinity also helps reclaim the masculine ideals Podles finds missing in the Western church.¹⁶⁷ The intentional crucibles force a man to reject passivity and become active; the conversion reorients the man away from himself to serve others; and the “brotherly love” binds a man to a committed community. By refocusing on struggle, conversion and brotherly love, the church can communicate the gospel in masculine tones. Calls for *challenges*, *change* and *community* can help to catalyze God’s transformative work by providing initiation rituals for men to confirm their precarious masculinity.

A call to transformative *change*—and not self-acceptance—aligns with the boyhood struggle of differentiation from the mother:

Men have a natural understanding of the process of and the need for conversion. They know from their childhood experiences and their inculcation in the ideology of masculinity the importance of dying to the old self and being reborn as a new self. All scholars who have compared the lives of men and women saints remark on the importance of conversion in men’s lives and the relative lack of it in women’s.¹⁶⁸

This desire to reject the old self initiates an internal struggle against the passive self so that a new identity may emerge.

A commitment to *struggle* is not a call to the violence demonstrated in hyper-masculinity, because “the true struggle is not with flesh and blood.”¹⁶⁹ Instead, it is a call to embrace crucibles as events that will produce an inner-struggle and a spiritual struggle against internal forces. It is

¹⁶⁷ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 197.

¹⁶⁸ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 198.

¹⁶⁹ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 202.

an acknowledgement that purposeful masculinity is not the norm, but a constant ideal to strive towards. This struggle is against their passive or hyper-masculine tendencies.

Usually, this conversion and struggle cannot be achieved in isolation. Men forge a brotherly bond through their shared ordeals. This bond reunites the isolated masculine heart into a local community to stand side by side with his comrades. The Greek terms used for fellowship (*koinonia*) and the church (*ecclesia*) exemplify this ideal of an active, outward-oriented community. *Koinonia* implies active participation and means “a close association involving mutual interests and sharing.”¹⁷⁰ *Ecclesia* is a “gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place.”¹⁷¹ Both terms describe the ideal church for men, because they provide a process to address the three tenets of precarious masculinity: through shared interests and struggles, men are called out of the domesticated sphere in order to publicly demonstrate their beliefs. This is what the modern church needs to reclaim.

In order to rebuild his precarious masculine identity, a man needs to persistently confront intentional physical crucibles within a male community that places him beside peers and potential mentors where he can demonstrate his manhood. Thereafter he can reintegrate with feminine communities in confidence.

Without these intentional crucibles and male relationships, men will lose to the prevailing attacks of the culture. As the threats mount, men reveal either avoidant passivity or aggressive hyper-masculinity. The unchallenged man will either create his own chaos or shrink into the shadows. Whether it is promiscuity or pornography, gambling or debt, abuse or neglect, he is

¹⁷⁰ Frederick W Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 552.

¹⁷¹ Joseph Henry Thayer, “Ecclesia,” Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), entry 1577.

pulled between the extremes of aggressive hyper-masculinity and avoidant passivity. However, by establishing environments where a positive form of masculinity is displayed, the man has a third archetype to strive towards.

F3 (Fitness, Fellowship, Faith)

On January 1, 2011, thirty-four men gathered at a local school in Charlotte, North Carolina, to begin a movement called F3. Since that time, over 1,000 workouts have begun across the country, and an estimated 15,000 men are part of the “F3Nation.”¹⁷² On completion of the first workout, the founding group of F3 men were startled to notice that their average age was forty-three. They believed that F3 initially attracted these men, not only because it offered a physical workout, but because it also fulfilled a deeper internal longing. At age forty men are reassessing their lives: “In the months that followed [F3’s start], ‘43’ would become an F3 in-joke, but it was no joke. F3 worked because it was addressing the fundamental desire for purpose that men have as they enter [this stage] of their lives...”¹⁷³ This attitude coincides with Levinson’s “Age 40 Transition” stage theory, where men begin to ask: “‘What have I done with my life? What do I really get from and give to my wife, children, friends, work, community—and self? What is it I truly want for myself and others?’ A man yearns for a life in which his actual desires, values, talents and aspirations can be expressed.”¹⁷⁴ While the initial group of men were in the “Age 40 Transition” stage, due to the desire that F3 expand, participants quickly began to vary in age.

¹⁷² Craig Melvin, “How Fitness, Fellowship and Faith Are Bringing Thousands of Men Together,” *The Today Show*, NBC, March 25, 2017, <http://www.today.com/video/how-fitness-fellowship-and-faith-are-bringing-thousands-of-men-together-906361923839>.

¹⁷³ David Redding and Tim Whitmire, *Freed To Lead: F3 and the Unshackling of the Modern-Day Warrior* (Charlotte, NC: Iron Project, 2014), 139.

¹⁷⁴ Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man’s Life*, 60.

The men in Levinson's "Becoming One's Own Man" stage (age 32-38), saw F3 as a mechanism for finding and establishing their niche and for working at achievement.¹⁷⁵ F3 affords these men an opportunity to attempt to lead other men. The men who have crested the "Age 50 Transition," find themselves part of an intergenerational men's group that offers mentoring avenues in order to identify "Mid-Life individuation" and start leaving a legacy: "At mid-life, the growing recognition of mortality collides with the powerful wish for immortality and the many illusions that help to maintain it."¹⁷⁶ F3 affords these men a place to experience the polarity between their youthfulness and maturity. It brings together the peer, elder-sibling, and father friendships Levinson said were necessary. With these discrepancies in life stages, F3 attracts men no matter what their physical strength, spiritual background, or life experiences.

Recognizing the impact of the model, F3 has created a decentralized form of leadership with the capacity to replicate, adapt and grow. It is based on the work of Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom concerning "starfish organizations."¹⁷⁷ The authors contrast starfish and spider organizations, finding starfish organizations replicate easily because they have a decentralized form of leadership. Furthermore, the participants have high levels of flexibility and responsibility within the organization. Alcoholics Anonymous is an example of a starfish organization. By contrast, "spider" organizations are rigid, being centralized and hierarchical in their leadership form, and with a clear division of roles and responsibilities. Ford Motor Company is an example of a spider organization.

¹⁷⁵ Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, 140.

¹⁷⁶ Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, 215.

¹⁷⁷ Ori Brafman and Rod A Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (New York, NY: Portfolio, 2014).

Starfish organizations are open systems where “you automatically become part of the leadership—an arm of the starfish if you will—the moment you join...Because there is no one in charge, everyone is responsible for keeping themselves—and everyone else—on track.”¹⁷⁸ This starfish approach encourages a missional organization.

The mission of F3 is therefore “to plant, serve and grow small workout groups, in order to reinvigorate male community leadership.”¹⁷⁹ This mission is demonstrated practically because once a local workout reaches fifteen to thirty men, it is considered “problematic” and needs to be divided into further workouts.¹⁸⁰ This strategy forces new leadership, reduces self-interested preservation, and prevents stasis within the movement.

To be considered an F3 workout, the group must follow five principles. It must be:

- free of charge.
- open to all men.
- held outdoors, rain or shine, hot or cold.
- led by men who participate in the workout in a rotating fashion, with no training or certification necessary.
- ended with a Circle of Trust.¹⁸¹

The “Circle of Trust,” is the gathering at the end of a workout where men state their name and age, where first-time attendees are given a nickname, and a prayer is offered. Though the Circle of Trust was initially challenged as being unnecessary, the founding men of F3 discovered that it provided an important bonding opportunity for the newest members and the veterans, such that it quickly became “an essential part of the F3 workout that F3 men who attended other outdoor group workouts would complain that it didn’t feel right when everyone just sort of wandered off

¹⁷⁸ Brafman, *The Starfish and the Spider*, 37.

¹⁷⁹ “About F3,” *F3nation.com*, accessed February 20, 2017, <http://f3nation.com/about-us>.

¹⁸⁰ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 26.

¹⁸¹ “About F3,” *F3nation.com*, accessed October 18, 2016, <http://f3nation.com/about-us>.

at the end of the workout without any formal ending.”¹⁸² In its very structure and core principles, F3 intentionally addresses male passivity by requiring active participation and promoting ritualistic ways of confirming belonging, such as nicknaming.

This movement provides an initiation process that addresses men’s precarious masculinity, heads off the threat of passivity, provides opportunity for intentional physical crucibles and catalyzes male reengagement in the community. In essence, F3 provides a symbolic process through which a man can undergo the hero’s quest.

The United States suburban culture that F3 has effectively infiltrated is similar to the Truk Islands and Spain, as represented in Gilmore’s research. As in those other cultures, the stable suburban, post-feminist, post-industrial culture fails to provide rites of manhood. “Manhood remains forever in doubt, requiring daily demonstration,” because there is “little or no ritual confirmation [of manhood], leaving each man to find his own way.”¹⁸³ With its clear principles, liminality to the challenges, and ritualistic mode of initiating members, F3 therefore provides men with rites of manhood and does not leave them in an ambiguous state. F3’s controlled crucibles become threshold moments for men.

Through active participation in a local workout, the man proceeds through a micro-example of Campbell’s heroic quest; he separates from the safety of his home, participates in a physical ordeal that pushes him to the edge of his capabilities, and then he returns to the broader community prepared to lead as a result of his confirmed masculinity and confidence. Since there are no fees, fitness tests or contracts to connect a man to F3, in order to belong, a man must simply attend and participate in a localized workout. Belonging is based on active participation.

¹⁸² Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 111.

¹⁸³ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 56-7.

The intention of F3 is that the first F (Fitness) becomes a magnet that draws men together in a common goal. This leads to the positive elements associated with physical activity, plus a unique male-only environment in which the precarious masculine identity can be publicly confirmed. The second F (Fellowship) is the glue that keeps men connected. The bond that forms between these men deepens and its impact extends as they learn to become reliant upon and accountable to other men. Ultimately, the third F (Faith),¹⁸⁴ is described as the dynamic that turns a man's orientation a way from himself by propelling him into other arenas of life in order to serve.

By reducing their passivity and governing their hyper-masculinity, the men of F3 are prepared to undergo their manhood quest in order to reconstruct a positive hegemonic form of masculinity that will influence their fatherhood, marriages, occupations and communities.

Fitness: The Magnet

The physical challenge of a workout is what will often attract a man to his first F3 gathering. While there is no prescribed method of workout, one of the core principles is that all men should be able to participate at their own desired level:

¹⁸⁴ One important distinction needs to be made about F3's use and understanding of the term "Faith." F3 is not a religious organization with a set of established beliefs. Therefore, F3 does not catechize men into a belief system, but seeks to expose a man to other men's belief systems so that he may assess, discover and formulate his own belief system. Therefore, the third F (Faith) is in reference not to a specific doctrinal system of beliefs, but to one's beliefs in action. This exposure is emphasized by placing "Faith" in the brandname which frees men up to speak openly about their belief systems. Also, by requiring every workout to close with a prayer, men hear another man pray publicly. By encouraging religious-focused discussion groups and promoting service-oriented activities, men are challenged to discover where their motivation resides. However, F3 is not trying to co-mingle beliefs into a singular system of coexistence or distill all beliefs into a singular Higher Power. Initially this was tried through a concept of G.O.R.P. (God or Other Religious Persons) but that was dismissed as ineffective. This encouragement to discuss and display one's own religious belief system allows F3 to be open to men of all faiths and no faith. This distinction is important because by labeling the fruit of a man's belief system as "faith," Protestant theologians appropriately criticize the implication of the righteousness of works.

The workout is not dumbed down or slowed down, but no man is left behind. This is a key to F3 ethic. We do not leave a man behind. Less experienced [leaders] will sometimes (in their exuberance) lose sight of that but, there should always be a call from a vet to...not forget the men working to catch up. Don't leave anyone behind. We do not do that.¹⁸⁵

Therefore, each man is encouraged to “work his own workout,” while the leader is charged to make sure “no man is left behind.” The inclusive nature of the workouts mean that there has to be high adaptation based upon the participants. While leaders arrive with a plan, the changing environment and participants mean that the leaders have to be highly creative and adaptable. Therefore the leaders learn through experience to become adaptive leaders who are watching and aware of each participant, modifying the routine as the group requires.

Workouts typically launch in the early morning from a pre-assigned parking lot. Over the next forty-five minutes to one hour, a leader will design a variety of exercises. The intention is to provide basic instruction and then direct men through a physical ordeal. Whether it is releasing them to run a pre-established route, or moving them through a variety of stations, or directing each movement through specific military style cadence-counts of a single exercise, the goal is to place the men into situations that will put them at their aerobic and physical limits alongside other men. This will often result in the men pushing themselves slightly further and faster than they thought possible.

Fellowship: The Glue

Participation is the method through which the men forge their communal bonds. The most common point of entry for a man attending F3 is through the invitation of an existing

¹⁸⁵ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 75.

member.¹⁸⁶ This initiates a relational bond that goes deeper than work or their spouse's connections and it is forged through F3.

At the end of his first workout, the new man is initiated into the community with a nickname. The nickname becomes the glue that connects a man to other men. At his first workout, he is introduced as a FNG (Friendly New Guy), but at the completion of that workout he is given a nickname. The nicknaming process is the initiation ritual of F3 that confers a new status upon a man and is the method through which the group welcomes him into the community. His F3 name is what Joseph Campbell described as the "life-transmuting trophy."¹⁸⁷ However, this trophy only functions if it is used.

Even the fellowship bond is precariously held by a man. This means that as the existential question reappears in a man's life, he may begin to wonder if he is good enough to still be part of F3. The answer is effectively affirmed, however, when he reappears at a workout and is addressed by his nickname. He is still part of the community.

This new male community is different from most of a man's other friendships. As stated earlier, married, upper-middle-class men are the least likely to have meaningful friendships, and these men are also F3's primary base. What the F3 founders noticed is that most of the men's friendships appear in three forms—legacy, work and marital friendships.¹⁸⁸

Legacy friendships are carry-overs from high school, college or another time of intense male community, such as military service or team sports. Often these men will revert to their old personas in these relationships, retelling the stories from that era.

¹⁸⁶ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 17.

¹⁸⁷ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 167.

¹⁸⁸ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 51-55.

Work friendships are formed due to proximity to other men, where men share a task or responsibility that temporarily connects them. These friendships will often dissipate once the project or job is finished, however.

Interestingly, F3 started in Charlotte after a banking recession that stalled many men's careers. This meant that there was a noticeable lack of interest in the men of F3 connecting through work. At one Bible-study, once the group had completed the "Circle of Trust" by sharing their names, a new man suggested that the group go back around and share what they do. Immediately, another man spoke up and said, "We don't do that in F3." Beneath the surface of this response was an implication that F3 is one of the few areas in a man's life where his occupation is incidental to the relationships being formed.

Finally, marital friendships are formed through the relationships of their spouses. These men have very little similarities, other than their spouse's (or children's) friendships. Since these friendships do not form through shared experiences or shared tasks, the men thus brought together often lack similar interests.

Noting these three inadequate forms, the men of F3 seek to develop a new form of friendship that is built through shared struggles. F3's philosophy to life is that "If you want to run faster, you have to run with faster guys." By intentionally surrounding oneself with men who are slightly more capable, a man will be pushed further. This means a passive man will be encouraged to go further than he thought possible. A hyper-masculine man will be humbled by other men who are just as capable as him. Rather than remaining passive or divisively competitive, F3 gathers men who want to spur one another on through the challenges. Doing this produces a cadre of men a man can depend on:

Inevitably, the world will shake a man. When that happens, the damage done to the foundation of his life will depend upon the depth of his male friendships. The stronger and more stubborn his friendships are, the less likely they are to fall...it's these sticky friendships that a SadClown lacks. His friendships are finite and situational. With F3, that changes. Having gotten shape through shared pain and sweat, he finds he has formed deep bonds with the men in his workout. When the world starts to shake, these guys don't fall...¹⁸⁹

This process builds a new form of male friendship based not upon one's situation, but instead on the trust that comes from confronting a challenge together. Trust is the key social adhesive supporting communal interactions.¹⁹⁰ Stephen Covey notes: "Simply put, trust means *confidence*. The opposite of trust—distrust—is suspicion. When you trust people, you have confidence in them—in their integrity and in their abilities. When you distrust people, you are suspicious of them—of their integrity, their agenda, their capabilities or their track record."¹⁹¹

By routinely facing obstacles together, the men are able to see each other's abilities and determine if they are reliable. Having established this foundation, a man is no longer suspicious of these other men and can harness the new relationships for a greater purpose.

Faith: The Dynamite

With his masculinity no longer tenuously held because of the physical testing and communal confirmation, a man feels confident and unthreatened. He is prepared to turn his attention beyond himself: "The outward-turning-man is what makes F3 a dynamic force in the lives of other men."¹⁹² This is what sets F3 apart from a workout club or social gathering. The goal is not to be first in your own life.

¹⁸⁹ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 96.

¹⁹⁰ Bruce J. Avolio et al., "Leadership in Applied Psychology: Three Waves of Theory and Research," *Journal of Applied Psychology* (January 26, 2017), 2.

¹⁹¹ Stephen M. R. Covey and Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2008), 5.

¹⁹² Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 109.

“I am Third” is a motto that was introduced to one of the F3’s founders during Special Forces training: God is first, family and friends are second, I am third.¹⁹³ This is the goal of the reinvigorated male—to be rejecting passivity and actively leading his community by placing himself third. Seeking to actively encourage others, the unthreatened male is able to take his eyes off himself and notice the needs of others.

One way this took root in F3 was in December 2013, when a Vietnam veteran was encouraged to start a new workout entitled the “Silver Bullet Express.” The mission of this workout was “to provide a workout for men who have been less active over the last few years and for men who are recovering from an injury or some other physical issue.” At one particular workout, they discovered the eight men ranged in age from sixty-nine to seventy-five.¹⁹⁴ By engaging “senior” men and adapting the workout style for the participants’ physical needs, F3 was able to broaden its engagement by designing workouts for this population’s physical limitations.

At another workout, a man realized the benefit of being around men who publicly display their faith. While the men were gathering to pray, a car wreck occurred nearby. All the men ran towards the plume of smoke where they discovered a young man trapped in the burning car. As one of the F3 men plunged himself into the “burn zone” to free the young man, the other men prayed and offered words of encouragement. The man who stepped into the fire reflected that he was most moved that day by watching the other F3 men pray. He said he can be “quick to act and slow to pray,” but that he was powerfully affected by watching a group of men spring into action

¹⁹³ The story is retold and credited to Gale Sayers’ autobiography in Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 113-114.

¹⁹⁴ Howard Duvall, “Silver Bullet Express,” *F3Nation*, December 21, 2013, accessed on February 8, 2016, <http://f3nation.com/2013/12/21/silver-bullet-express-would-you-believe-that-our-war-baby-is-only-69>.

through prayer that morning.¹⁹⁵ He noted: “Like the best F3 leaders, who circle back to encourage and motivate a [man] who is struggling at the rear of a workout, these guys surrounded the young man and gave him their focus until EMT arrived so that he would not be alone in his fight to live.”¹⁹⁶

While heroic in his actions, the man realized his need to be in a community with men who are quick to pray. F3 therefore affords men daily opportunities to test themselves physically, relationally, emotionally and spiritually. They proceed through the hero’s quest to emerge with a cadre of men ready to impact their community.

As the positive influence of F3 emerges within a man and his group, he desires to see this spread beyond the group. Another effort of particular note occurred at Charlotte’s Rescue Mission, which is a residential rehabilitation center for men who have struggled with addiction, recovery and incarceration. A group of F3 men decided that these men also needed an opportunity to undergo the hero’s quest, so they started a workout entitled “Mission I’m Possible.” As one resident stated after completing his first F3 workout, since most evenings he drank to the point of passing out, this was the first time he had felt like a man in ten years. His masculinity had been restored.

Also, after another workout at “Mission I’m Possible,” as the F3 men walked back to their cars, the workout leader was surprised to see one man remain behind:

The most important lesson I learned was also the most embarrassing. The F3 guys are usually pretty clean cut. We think that’s what makes us different. There was a man there, a good looking guy, nice haircut, well spoken...he was doing pretty well in the workouts. I assumed he was one of “us.” When we finished, and had

¹⁹⁵ Brockway, “Into the Fire.”

¹⁹⁶ Randy Brockway, “Into the Fire,” *F3Nation*, August 8, 2014, accessed on February 3, 2017 at <http://f3nation.com/2014/08/08/into-the-fire/>.

completed the “ball of man” prayer, he was hesitant to answer my questions about where he worked, and what he did when he wasn’t working out. He then shook my hand, thanked me for coming, and went back into the dorm. He wasn’t one of “us.” He was one of “them.”

I felt so ashamed. Who do I think I am, seeing “us” and “them”? Are we not all broken, seeking the one Christ that makes us whole again? Did it really matter what we wore? Was that how I figured out who I might have something in common with, who was like me, based on their haircut and their clothes? I prayed as soon as I got back to my car, asking for forgiveness, for a greater spirit so that I could see people how God sees them. There is no us and them. We are all together.¹⁹⁷

Finding this common bond, the man discovered that these workouts were not exercises in charitable outreach to these residents, but opportunities to work alongside other men God could use to expose his own sins. A few months later the same leader was helping to build beds at the Charlotte Rescue Mission, when a female staffer gave the group directions, assuming that he was a resident. He closed his reflection by writing: “I didn’t say a word. I knew, in my heart of hearts, I was one of THEM. And happy to be.”¹⁹⁸

Since the men of F3 are also trained to watch other men, this skill is taken beyond the individual workout sessions. Confident of who they are, they are able to see others in need. In the fall of 2016, a member of F3 was running on his own when he came across a man on an overpass, standing over the railing waiting to throw himself two stories in front of an oncoming truck. The F3 man stopped his “me time”—as he described it—in order to listen to the story of the man’s life. While he engaged the man, the police and emergency people arrived. Finally, the suicidal man climbed over the railing from death back to life. Reflecting on this experience, the

¹⁹⁷ Jason Rhymer, “Mission I’m Possible,” *Faith & Fitness Magazine*, March 2014, accessed February 3, 2017, <http://faithandfitness.net/content/mission-im-possible>.

¹⁹⁸ Rhymer, “Mission I’m Possible.”

F3 man looked beyond his own heroics to notice the strange confluence of events that led him to that particular bridge on that particular morning:

F3 Nation deserves credit, too. It is because of F3 that I get out of bed early a few times a week, lace up, and run more than I ever dreamed of even in my athlete days. Sunday's long run traces straight back to F3's influence. And F3 has a place, also, for guys like my new friend from the overpass.¹⁹⁹

This man demonstrated the fruit of F3, because he was not so self-consumed by his workout to stop. Instead, he noticed a desperate man and sought to find a deeper connection with him.

Prepared to Lead

Men who have undergone challenges, such as those F3 provides, are thus better prepared to reintegrate into their communities and to impact the lives of others. They are more likely to lead effectively because they do not view the world through the same lens. No longer are environments, especially emasculating ones, viewed as existential threats. This means that men are able to embrace the challenges as catalysts for change so that they may more effectively lead their communities.

Unlike the Bible's Adam, who hid his identity when confronted, these men are more willing to engage with opportunities that will test them. Also, unlike Cain who killed the one man who threatened his identity, these men are prepared to encourage one another rather than be threatened by others.

This is the sort of multiplicative leadership that develops when a man's masculinity is no longer precarious. He does not have to passively avoid the threats, nor does he have to aggressively prove himself. Instead, he is confident in his masculinity, which allows him to

¹⁹⁹ Robert Huggins, "Standing on the Brink of Life," *F3Nation*, November 16, 2016, accessed February 2, 2017, <http://f3nation.com/2016/11/21/standing-on-the-brink-of-life/>.

invest in the well-being of his wife, children, friends, church and community. Having rebuilt the base of Maslow's pyramid with physical and relational strength, he is able to focus on a purposeful masculine identity.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

“Where are you?”
God to Adam

“What have you done?”
God to Cain

— *Genesis 3:9 & 4:10*

The elusive nature of masculinity causes men to wrestle with lingering issues of insecurity. Men deal with these issues using one of two methods: either through passivity or hyper-masculinity. Both approaches, however, result in shame. By exploring the biblical foundation for this insecurity, it is possible to expand on the preceding psychological, literary and anthropological research and develop a biblical framework for this project.

While Larry Crabb highlights Adam as the primary male archetype in *The Silence of Adam*, secular psychologist, Lipton Szondi, identifies the Cain archetype as another essential character for understanding humanity:

The theme of Cain and Abel functions as the leitmotiv of [Szondi's] complete works. From the start, this myth is Szondi's favorite theme. According to him, it discloses the most essential aspect of what “being human” means. According to Szondi, Cain's murder of Abel confronts us, in a magnified and excessive way, with the most atrocious possibilities of human instinctual life. Cain's aggression evokes something of which every single human being is capable.¹

Adam establishes man's tendency towards passivity, while Cain expresses a reactionary hyper-masculinity. By examining not only the first two male characters to appear in Scripture, but also

¹ Jens De Vleminck, “Oedipus and Cain: Brothers in Arms,” *International Forum of Psychoanalysis* 19, no. 3 (September 2010): 175.

God's original intent, what emerges is a third, pre-Fall form of purposeful masculinity, one that contrasts with the distorted forms of Adamic passivity and Cainite hyper-masculinity.

Genesis 1 provides an avenue for understanding the synecdochal relation between masculinity and femininity in God's creation; Genesis 2 forms the characteristic for purposeful, biblical masculinity.² Then, Genesis 3 and 4 reveal the two archetypes where men fail to adhere to biblical masculinity.³

Genesis 1: In the Beginning

Genesis 1 introduces a creative God who moves from ordering the universe to establishing human relationships. Like a zoom lens that moves from the macro-view into sharpened focus, Genesis 1 starts with the cosmos and ends in the formation of two human beings united in identity, blessing and task:

27a: So God created the Adam in his own image,
27b: in the image of God he created him;
27c: male and female he created them.

This provides the method for understanding the unified relationship between males and females, which is symbolized in the synecdochal relationship described as "the Adam" (Gen 1:27a).⁴

² Throughout the rest of this research "Biblical Masculinity" will be used to describe the purposeful masculinity formed in the earlier chapter. It was too difficult to find an appropriate title to contrast Adamic and Cainite masculinity in the biblical narrative. Rather than create confusion with a term like "pre-fall adamic masculinity," the simpler "Biblical Masculinity" was selected.

³ "An archetype [character] is a particular way of using words to express the inexpressible...in this way we can see that an archetypal [character]...expresses something that is important and ultimate. Far from being a fabrication, an archetypal [character] indicates the totally true." James Miller, *Listen Up—God Talking! An Introduction to Biblical Living* (New York, NY: iUniverse Inc, 2004), 15. This understanding of archetype suggests the nature of these stories is to reveal what is important and ultimate about manhood. Adam and Cain are the first two embodiments of masculinity that become archetypal for the rest of manhood.

⁴ This synecdochal use of אָדָם in Genesis affords a window for viewing Jesus Christ as the Second Adam, who is the perfect union of femininity and masculinity. Jesus becomes the depiction of full humanity and the savior of both genders by reversing the mutual fall of Adam and Eve, who combine to make the first "Adam" in Genesis 1:27.

The singularity and plurality of the Hebrew constructs in this section are important, because their interchange in verses 26 and 27 show the unity and diversity of God as well as the unity and diversity of males and females, who are formed in that likeness. In 1:26, God (אֱלֹהִים) creates the man (אָדָם) in the plural form of “our image” (צִלְמֵנוּ). Then in verse 27a, the singular אָדָם is being formed in the likeness of the singular image of God: “in His own image.” However, in verse 27c, it is said that the dual natures of male (זָכָר) and female (נִקְבָּה) were created; from the singularity of “the Adam” (אָדָם, 27a) comes a plurality of maleness and femaleness (Gen. 1:27c).

The tension of singularity and plurality is therefore used to describe both God and “the Adam.” The title given to God (אֱלֹהִים), is a plural construct that uses a singular verb. However, the relational plurality of אֱלֹהִים is further identified in verse 26 by the use of the plural qal imperative (נַעֲשֶׂה): “Let us make...”

[T]his relational understanding of the divine image could make some sense of the divine plural in Genesis 1:26, “*Let us make....*” While probably a plural of majesty, many Christian commentators have also seen here a glimpse—all unbeknown to the Genesis author—of what was so much later formulated as the doctrine of the Trinity...the most likely answer is that he was “talking to himself”—a communion between the creative Word of God and the creative Spirit of God, in both of whom God’s Being is seen in his Creative Acts.⁵

⁵ David John Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11: The Dawn of Creation*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1990), 39.

This plurality of relationship is then reduced to a singular verb (יִבְרָא) in verse 27a when it is used to describe God's action of creation. The divine image is thus described as plural in construct, but singular in action: distinctive oneness.⁶ It is in this likeness that humanity is also formed.

Created in his image, the unique identity of God's final object of creation is revealed to be plural in nature, as both male and female (v. 26), yet singular in intent. Together, they are to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion..." (v. 28). As Aida Spencer argues,

"The Adam" is a "male and female." Thus "the Adam" could be translated as "human" or "humanity;" however, the effect of the synecdoche would be lost. The synecdoche "Adam" is a singular which represents the plural "male and female." By having the one "Adam" represent the two "male and female," the writer has emphasized the essential unity and diversity of Adam and Eve. Their relationship is foundational.⁷

It is in this united relationship of male and female that God blesses and tasks them with mutual care of his creation.

The male and female union described in Genesis 1:27b as "him" forms the likeness of God, receives the mutual blessing, and both are tasked with the same global responsibility. It is at the dramatic completion of this creative account that God calls his entire creation "very good."

⁶ While one argument around the plural issue of "Let us" is the "plural of majesty," Gerhard F. Hasel argues "plurals of majesty exist with nouns in the Hebrew languages but there are no certain examples of plurals of majesty with either verbs or pronouns." Instead, Hasel views this construct as a "plurality of fullness," which focuses on God's oneness in plan and distinction in personality. Hasel draws on Karl Barth's terminology in *Church Dogmatics 3.1*, in which Barth notes it is only in his final creative action that God has an intra-divine soliloquy. The use of the royal plural and its theological implications cannot be discussed fully in this research, nevertheless an acknowledgement of this plurality and unity within the Creator is necessary.

Gerhard F Hasel, "Meaning of 'Let Us' in Gn 1:26," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 13, no. 1 (1975): 63.

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation*, Vol. 3.1 (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010), 180-181.

⁷ Aída Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1985), 21.

This interchange between the plurality and singularity of humanity is important for understanding biblical masculinity, because it shows that pre-fall masculinity is not a rejection of femininity or an assertion of superiority. While there is a division between male and female, it is not antagonistic. Therefore, masculinity's threat from the feminine is not established before the curse of Genesis 3:16. This means that a masculine identity formed on an anti-feminine reaction is not sufficient. Masculinity cannot passively disengage from the feminine, nor can it hyper-aggressively divide. Maleness and femaleness are distinct forms of the same identity, blessing and tasks assigned to the synecdoche Adam in Genesis 1.

It is worth noting that humankind is spoken of as singular ("he created him") and plural ("he created them"). This peculiar formula makes an important affirmation. On the one hand, humankind is a single entity. All human persons stand in solidarity before God. But on the other hand humankind is a community, male and female. And none is the full image of God alone. Only in community of humankind is God reflected.⁸

Since humankind is reflective of God when in communal union, the reintegration of men into a feminized community is also necessary so that they can work together in concert.

The passive and hyper-masculine responses to femininity are therefore not the created design of Genesis 1, because it was God's intent that they would work jointly. Understanding that men and women were created to work jointly in community provides the foundation from which their specific responsibilities are generated. While men stand in solidarity with the feminine, they also stand apart in their unique responsibilities commanded by God in Genesis 2.

The second creation account (Genesis 2-3) depicts not the synecdoche Adam, but the specific man named Adam, in order to show three unique responsibilities given to him. As the

⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 33-34.

narrative changes from the cosmic view of the union of maleness and femaleness, it focuses on three specific responsibilities of manhood, as assigned to Adam in Genesis 2. However, by the third and fourth chapter, we discover that the first two men charged with these responsibilities fail to uphold the specific commands. As a result, Adam and Cain develop insecure forms of masculinity that either seek to avoid responsibility or to respond with self-aggrandizing violence.

While the first creation account reveals that man was designed to work jointly with the female, the story unfolds to show that ultimately men are unable to live up to this purposeful, biblical masculinity, because either male passivity causes men to fail to act, or hyper-masculinity isolates them as they react violently.

Genesis 2: The Purposeful Man

The second chapter of Genesis provides a personified account of creation. No longer is “the Adam” (אָדָם) in this pericope a reference to the synecdochal unity of maleness and femaleness. Instead it addresses the unique creation known as “the man.” It is here that the reader is given the three specifics of the man’s responsibility.

Robert Lewis writes, “God has given the first man a *will* to obey (“don’t eat the fruit”), a *work* to do (“cultivate the garden”) and a *woman* to love.”⁹ In other words, the man is tasked with obedience to God (2:16), service and protection of creation (2:15), and finally a clinging

⁹ Robert Lewis, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight: A Father’s Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 52.

relational commitment (2:24). These are the specific responsibilities given to the first man: obedience, service and commitment.¹⁰

Active Obedience

The first verbal command given to the man is twofold: freedom and prohibition. He is permitted to eat of any tree (2:16) and then prohibited from eating from one tree (v. 17). This command proceeds all other requirements for the man, and strangely no rationale is provided. Walter Brueggemann explains: “What counts is the fact of the prohibition, the authority of the one who speaks and the unqualified expectation of obedience.”¹¹ It is a command of freedom and prohibition: a test of obedience.

While attention is often drawn to the prohibition of one tree, the command also entails the freedom to enjoy the bounty of God’s creation. It is important to recognize that the command of God is broader than his prohibition, because it shows that obedience to God is not only prohibitive inaction (do not eat) but also requires action (eat). Adam is commanded to action and inaction in accordance to the will of God. In fact, the Hebrew uses a couplet (תֹּאכַל אֵכֶל) to emphasize God’s permission to “surely eat.” God is not purely restrictive; his command places more emphasis on active participation than on prohibition.

¹⁰ Again, the intention of this study is to develop the characteristics and failures of men. It is not intended to imply any characteristics or tasks of women. For example, the call of the man to “cling” to his wife does not suggest women are freed from that responsibility, nor does it suggest that they have to accept clingy men. This work is concerned with the call upon men, because of their nature to separate from the feminine.

¹¹ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 46.

Adam is commanded to a form of obedience that is “bounded freedom.”¹² Like Quinn's theory of “bounded instability,” God establishes parameters for active obedience. He is provided the freedom to “surely eat” within the boundaries of a restriction. He is not permitted to become passively inactive, nor is he free to be aggressively hedonistic. It is this dual command that becomes Adam's primary task in the garden: obedience to the will of God.

Also, by having this command located in the activity of nourishment, Adam is confronted daily with his decision to actively obey God. His trustworthiness is tested and displayed through his physical actions; each time he decides to eat, he is deciding whether to obey or disobey God. His obedience to God is therefore constantly held in a precarious state. This is how Adam shows his belief in God: “True knowledge of God comes through commitment, trust and participation in him.”¹³ By trusting and participating in God's creation, Adam reveals his commitment and confirms his relationship to his Creator. He is actively obedient to God.

In reiterating the primacy of this relationship between Adam and God, it is important to also note that at this point in the narrative Adam is secluded from the rest of the animal kingdom, and Eve has not been formed. This gives obedience to God's commands primacy over the relationships with Eve and God's creation.

Purposeful Servanthood

Just prior to the command, Genesis 2:15 tells us that God has placed the man in the Garden of Eden to “serve” (עבד) and “protect” (שמר). God's call to obedience is associated with

¹² Keller discusses this concept in *The Reason for God* as follows: “Freedom is not so much the absence of restriction as finding the right ones, the liberating restrictions.”

Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2009), 46.

¹³ Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11*, 67.

God's call to servanthood. God has created Adam for meaningful work, because, as Frankl discovered, without meaning and purpose the masculine spirit withers.

Though God's creation has been identified as "good," God recognizes that the man needs a vocation to maintain this good order. Therefore, "work is good, surely to enhance the garden. From the beginning of human destiny, God is prepared to entrust the garden to his special creature."¹⁴ The man's service and protection of God's creation is the specific way in which he fulfills the earlier command to have dominion (רדה, Gen 1:28): "'dominion' cannot be exploitation, but must be seen in the sort of facilitating servanthood which maintains an environment..."¹⁵ To rule over God's creation is for Adam a position of servanthood that watches over all of God's creation.

The term עבד means difficult work for the benefit of another or "to serve."¹⁶ It is used not only to describe the tilling of soil, but also work done in service of another. For example, Jacob's tasks are done in service to Laban's sheep because of his love for Rachel (Gen 29:10). Even though he did not personally benefit from it, Jacob does the work the other shepherds refused. This type of service work thus demonstrates a loving commitment to God because it is for the benefit of the community.

Similarly שמר means "to keep watch" and "have responsibility over."¹⁷ It is used to describe the role of a shepherd who preserves and protects the animals under his care: "The Hebrew verb [שמר], typically translated 'watch' can mean 'guard' or 'oversee.' Shepherds are

¹⁴ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 46.

¹⁵ Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11*, 41.

¹⁶ Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 713.

¹⁷ Brown et al., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 1036-7.

watchmen and guards over the flock, the ones who oversee them. At night their primary duty is to protect the animals under their care from thieves and animal predators.”¹⁸ In other words, שמר is used to describe the work of a servant who offers protective oversight. The man is therefore tasked with עבד and שמר. Combining those, he is to be in active service protecting others placed under his care.

God establishes the man in the garden for the challenging task of serving and protecting all of God’s creation. By naming the animals (2:19), Adam is taking social responsibility for God’s creation: “[I]n the ancient world name-giving was an exercise in sovereignty. Adam is taking authority over the rest of the created order. The responsibility for stewardship in the natural order now extends to the animal world, and the man takes it on.”¹⁹ A purposeful masculinity thus has an element of social responsibility.

John Piper describes this as “benevolent responsibility” because it requires responsible action, and this action is always on behalf of another: “Benevolent responsibility is meant to rule out all self-aggrandizing authoritarianism (cf. Luke 22:26).”²⁰ This form of responsibility is in strict contrast to both passivity and hyper-masculinity.

Therefore, the masculine spirit is action-oriented in sacrificial service. The man is not permitted to avoid work, passively neglect his responsibility, nor manipulate the creation for his own benefit. He is not entitled to the benefits of God’s creation, but is required to live in active protection thereof. The test of obedience becomes a test of servanthood.

¹⁸ Timothy S. Laniak and David Ormesher, *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Rediscovering Biblical Leadership* (Matthews, NC: Shepherd Leader Publications, 2007), 117.

¹⁹ Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11*, 69.

²⁰ John Piper, *What’s the Difference?: Manhood and Womanhood Defined according to the Bible* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 21.

The second task of biblical masculinity—to serve and protect God’s creation—is therefore closely associated with the first task: obedience to God’s will. With man’s identity rooted in his obedience to God, and man’s meaning produced through his work, Adam is prepared for his final responsibility: commitment to his “helpmate.”

Clinging Commitment

The final charge to the man is that he is to “forsake his father and mother and cling to his woman” (Gen 2:24). Having established his relationship to God, and his role within creation, the final task acknowledges his need for companionship. To be a man in Genesis 2, is to be incomplete without companionship.²¹ Isolation is not part of God’s design.

The only time in either creation account that something is identified negatively as “not good” is when God says that it is “not good for man to be alone” (2:18). God therefore goes in search of a suitable “helper” (עֵזֶר) for the man. As God parades his creation, God is testing Adam in order to show him that “for the man no suitable helper was found” (2:20b):

Now the man has to wait and come to terms first with his animal companions.
Perhaps this is the way he realizes for himself that it is not good to be alone.

²¹ At this point, it is necessary to address a question the reader may have: “What about men who are not married?” John Piper emphasizes that mature masculine men have a “*sense* of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women...” He writes, “the word *sense* also implies the fact that a man can be mature in his masculinity when his circumstances do not put him in any relationship where he actually has the possibility to relate to any woman.” Jesuit Priest Jim Martin discusses repeatedly the loneliness the vow of chastity elicits. It unearths this “sense” of commitment within the priest, though they have vowed against fulfilling that commitment in a marital relationship. The argument presented is that mature masculinity has an awareness, desire and sense of the enduring commitment assigned to Adam; how that commitment is enacted is secondary. Biblical masculinity is thus aware of this responsibility, and either enacts it in marriage or, as James emphasizes, redirects this commitment toward care for the orphan and the widow (James 1:27). Genesis reveals that aloneness is not God’s plan, but that aching sense for companionship can be developed into spiritual friendships if marriage is not possible.

John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 20.

James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything a Spirituality for Real Life* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2012), 130.

Perhaps he himself is here learning to think about himself as God thinks about him. Gradually the animals pair off and move off, and Adam is left by himself. Now he, too, knows what God has known all along, that in the goodness of his creation, there is still a “not good” to be remedied.²²

Once Adam acknowledges that the creation lacks the companionship he needs, God is prepared to do his final act of creation.

Aida Spencer writes, “God wanted help for Adam, because God perceived Adam as needing help to till and guard the garden. Moreover, not just any help would suffice for the man. He needed another human, equal and corresponding to him, a friend. Adam and Eve together were to serve God.”²³ The result is that from the man God forms the woman. The male and female are separated and then reintegrated.

The physicality detailed in this creation story illuminates the unity and diversity formed between man and woman. It is through deep pain—the tearing of flesh and snapping of bone—that woman and man are related to each other. Matthew Henry writes, “[T]he woman was *made of a rib out of the side of Adam*; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”²⁴ This mode of creation reveals the nature and importance of the man’s clinging commitment. Now he will have to work to maintain this relationship. While initially man and woman are intimately intertwined, by the time of the post-fall accounts, that clinging commitment will become cursed (3:16), develop into a tarnished independence (4:9), result in promiscuity (4:19), and allow self-reliance to reign (11:4).

²² Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11*, 69.

²³ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 28.

²⁴ Matthew Henry and Leslie F Church, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary: Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1961), 7.

The third trait of biblical masculinity is therefore directed to the man, who is told to cling (דבק) to his wife: “Because Adam’s helper came from his own side or flesh, the helper becomes a person to whom Adam sticks.”²⁵ The man needs to be commanded to cling to his wife, however. Their union is no longer fused, but an optional act of committed connection. They are no longer connected as united bone and flesh, but bound through Adam's commitment. Therefore, the tests of obedience and servanthood culminate as a test of commitment.

Ominously, Genesis 2 closes with the charge and description relating to the man and woman’s intimate connection, foreshadowing the fact that the bond is about to be tested. “The narrative is open-ended. What will the human creatures do with their freedom? ...[In] a drama set in the locale of the forbidden tree...the focus shifts from God’s work to the initiatives of the human couple.”²⁶ The scene therefore fades out of focus, leaving the man in a precarious position, wondering how long his obedience, service and commitment will last. Will Adam be able to withstand the test and answer the question “am I good enough?”

Ultimately it is directly into the union between the male and female that the fissure begins to form, one which is exploited by the serpent. This unravels God’s “very good” creation. By exposing the burning question of the man’s capabilities, the serpent successfully distorts biblical masculinity.

Biblical Masculinity

Biblical masculinity seeks to demonstrate the three tasks given by God:

1. Obedience to the will of God
2. Service and protection of the creation of God

²⁵ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 28.

²⁶ Celia B Sinclair, *Genesis: Interpretation Bible Studies* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 13.

3. Commitment to man's female companion

As we move beyond Genesis 2 into the rest of Scripture, we are no longer shown an unadulterated form of biblical masculinity. "What is inescapably clear, however, is that Genesis 2 can only ever now be read from our side of Genesis 3."²⁷ This means that all future examples in Scripture and culture have become distorted by sin.²⁸ The three tasks assigned to the man in Genesis 2 therefore become corrupted by the pressure of sin and shame. This develops the precarious nature of a purposeful masculinity, which becomes the norm for men.

This purposeful and biblical form of masculinity is so quickly distorted that the goodness described in Genesis 2:25 is immediately displaced by insecurity, which becomes the root of man's existential question. By gaining knowledge of good and evil, but lacking the sovereign power to deal with it, Adam has placed himself—and as an archetype, all future adams—into an insecure situation of knowledge without power. In distorting their biblical masculinity, men either have to initiate Campbell's hero quest in order to reclaim it, or follow the archetypal patterns by falling towards the extremes of either Adamic passivity or Cainite hyper-masculinity.

Genesis 3: The Failure of Adamic Passivity

Suddenly the two main characters of Genesis 2—God and Adam—are noticeably absent in the opening scene of Genesis 3. While Eve actively participates in disobeying God's one

²⁷ Atkinson, *The Message of Genesis 1-11*, 79.

²⁸ This is an important distinction, because it allows for a distinction between traits described by David Clines and Susan Haddox as hegemonic biblical masculinity. The emphasis on honor, violence, promiscuity, power and wisdom are distorted forms, as are some of the traits in Mahalik's conformity inventory (i.e., violence, power over women, playboy, self-reliance, pursuit of status).

Susan E Haddox, "'The Lord Is with You, You Mighty Warrior': the Question of Gideon's Masculinity," *Proceedings* 30 (2010): 70–87

David J. A Clines, "David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible," in *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 212–41.

James R. Mahalik et al., "Development of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory," *Psychology of Men* (2003): 18.

prohibition, Adam silently participates. In his silence, Adam fails to live in obedience to God and instead demonstrates a corrupted form of masculinity: passivity. Adam's failures begin not with eating the fruit (3:6) but earlier, when he silently participates in this disobedience (3:1-5).

While some have argued that Eve is alone while being tempted by the serpent, a close reading of the text reveals Adam's attendance without participation. First, the second person plural is used by the serpent in the dialogue of Genesis 3:1-5: "When the serpent speaks to the woman it uses the plural, 'you,' not the feminine singular 'you'."²⁹ Furthermore, Eve's reply is also in the plural form that "we may eat" (נֹאכֵל). The use of the plural suggests Adam's presence.

While circumstantial, verse 6 brings clarity to the Adam's passive involvement:

Indeed, Adam is never directly mentioned, addressed, consulted, or acknowledged in any way in Genesis 3 until Eve gives him the fruit in v. 6b. At the very least, his being "with her" minimizes the possibility of a gap in the text where Eve might travel to find Adam or share the fruit later. More likely, עִמָּה resolves any lingering ambiguity about the man being with the woman when she eats.³⁰

The narrator implicates Adam in this scene; Adam is a fully inactive participant. "Adam, then, was a silent man, a passive man. Like many men in history, he was physically present but emotionally absent. He fades into the background of the story, rather than standing front and center on the stage."³¹ Adam's passivity shows the three ways in which he fails to demonstrate biblical masculinity:

1. Disregard for God's command: Avoidance
2. Abdication of his responsibility: Neglect
3. Separation from his commitments: Isolating Individuality

²⁹ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 30.

³⁰ For a detailed analysis: Julie Faith Parker, "Blaming Eve Alone: Translation, Omission, and Implications of עִמָּה in Genesis 3:6b," *Journal Of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 4 (Winter, 2013): 729-747.

³¹ Larry Crabb, Don Hudson, and Al Andrews, *The Silence of Adam: Becoming Men of Courage in a World of Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 91.

Avoidance

There has been one command from God: “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...” (Gen. 2:16-17). Freedom to participate and enjoy the bounty of God’s creation has been bounded with one imperative to “not eat” (לֹא תֹאכַל). Adam, however, does not protest Eve's actions but avoids conflict. With one twitch of his jaw, Adam fails to speak and instead eats the fruit. This misappropriated action causes him to disregard God’s command. He is not obedient but disobedient.

While charged with active obedience, the first action associated with Adam is disobedience: “and he ate” (וַיֹּאכַל). He does not eat in the manner permitted by God, however, but eats the only thing prohibited by God. The failure of Adam is his lack of regard for the clear boundaries God placed around this particular tree. He fails to assert himself. His failure is therefore in receiving Eve’s offering and avoiding the challenge to remain obedient to the will of God. Adam is neither assertive nor attempts to rectify the situation.

Adam participates fully in the erosion of the garden through his avoidance. He watches as Eve plucks the fruit from its stem, eats part of it, divides it, and hands him a portion of the fruit. Adam reveals himself to be unassertive and untrustworthy. This is only the first of his failures, because he not only actively disobeys God, but also neglects his call to serve and protect.

Negligence

Adam holds a unique responsibility, since he is the one who has been given God’s clear command. He holds the burden of responsibility: “In the Hebrew text, however, the burden of responsibility lies with the first human being, who alone hears the divine interdiction.”³² His

³² Parker, “Blaming Eve Alone,” 741.

failure to rebut the serpent and correct Eve is as dramatic a failure as ingesting the fruit. He abdicates his social responsibility.

When the serpent targets Eve with his question, Adam does not redirect its questioning. He does not defend the established order or remind Eve of God's provision. Adam negligently permits the disordering of God's creation:

A serpent represented chaos. People in the ancient Near East believed that a serpent symbolized deceit and confusion...but what happens in the face of chaos? Ironically, it is Eve who reflects the image of God more clearly than Adam because she speaks with the serpent. But what about Adam? If Adam was there, he was not speaking. Chaos had entered his perfect world, and he stood dumbfounded in its confusion and darkness.³³

Confronted with chaos, Adam lacks the confidence to respond and neglects his responsibility to protect the entirety of creation. Facing a crucible situation, Adam shrinks back.

This is Adam's second failure. Rather than speaking up to preserve the order established by God, Adam permits a serpent to deceive his wife. Adam does not demonstrate the type of servanthood and care tasked to him by God. He does not retain the order of the creation or show dominion over the serpent. Instead of standing between the two, he stands in the shadows.

He not only neglects confronting the challenge, but he also fails to accurately teach and transfer God's command to Eve (Gen 2:16-17). Adam misses one important detail. While Eve does respond, she speaks inaccurately. Eve is wrong in her quoting of God's command; she adds a secondary prohibitive clause that they "must not touch it" (3:3). God did not utter this secondary prohibition. Eve's inclusion of this new command is disruptive to God's creation, because it begins to limit the goodness of God.

³³ Crabb, *The Silence of Adam*, 91.

Eve views God as prohibitive. She has an inadequate view of God, namely that He is a restrictive deity. Adam has the opportunity to preserve Eve's relation with God by correcting her view of God's restrictiveness. Yet Adam neglects his responsibility to correct her misunderstanding. Adam is careless in his responsibility by neglecting to sustain God's order.

Adam fails to protect God's creation because he fails to stand between Eve and the serpent, and thereby maintain God's ordered creation. He also fails to serve God because he fails to stand between Eve and God to preserve their relationship. He does not rebuke the insinuating question of the serpent, nor correct Eve's misperception of God. Adam therefore neglects his responsibility for protecting the relationship between God and humanity. As a result, division begins to occur, causing Adam's third failure, which is isolation.

Isolating Individuality

Adam's third failure is that he does not remain united to his wife in their joint work. He disregards God's command, he neglects his responsibility and he severs his commitment in order to remain unthreatened. By disengaging from all social responsibility, Adam becomes an isolated individual: "The *prohibition* of 2:17 is violated. The permission of verse 16 is perverted. The vocation of verse 15 is neglected. There is no more mention of tending and feeding. They have no energy for that. Their interest has focused completely on self..."³⁴ As Aida Spencer says, "Eve, together with Adam, creates shame, independence and irresponsibility."³⁵ For Adam, an independence has emerged that separates him from his relational commitments. Adam no longer clings to his wife.

³⁴ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 48.

³⁵ Spencer, *Beyond the Curse*, 34.

Adam and Eve have been living in the committed union described in Genesis 2:24. However, immediately after the eating of the fruit, a wedge divides them. Linguistically, we notice a shift from the plural to the singular. The story shows they have become emotionally and spiritually separated. Adam uses the singular to refer to himself when confronted by God, suggesting that the two are no longer one (Gen 3:10-13).

Fully preoccupied with himself, Adam replies in the singular: “The speech of the indicted couple is revealing, for it is all ‘I.’ Therein lies the primal offense: ‘I heard...I was afraid...I was naked; I hid...I ate...I ate’ (3:10-13). Their own speech indicts them. It makes clear that their preoccupation with the Gardener...has been given up. Now the preoccupation is ‘I’.”³⁶ Adam has chosen to embrace autonomous individuality in place of the committed unity designed by God.

Patrick Arnold describes this individuality as, “the second strong masculine trait [that] is the drive for personal freedom. Men treasure their individual liberty. Men do not like to be captured, told what to do, interfered with, bound, gagged, domesticated, tamed or otherwise bridled by anybody.”³⁷ When confronted, the insecurity and passivity of Adam is on full display in his final speech in verse 12: “The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate’.”

Adam indicts first the woman and then blames God for His creation. His earlier exclamation of joy at their initial union (2:23) is now bitter blame. This is the final spoken line of Adam in this grand drama. Once the curses are declared and banishment has ensued, Adam passively lives out the rest of his existence silently. The wedge has split them.

³⁶ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 49.

³⁷ Arnold, *Wildmen, Warriors, and Kings*, 33.

This division is not only because they are no longer on speaking terms, but also in their final act of working jointly. Together they manufacture loincloths out of fig leaves (3:7). They create a physical barrier between themselves. The verb used to describe the process means “to sew together.”³⁸ By bringing together these covers, they are physically separating what has already been separated emotionally and relationally. This action establishes a boundary between themselves, and permanently separates what was once one flesh.

The final words and actions of Adam are self-absorbed defenses. Rather than clinging to his wife, Adam seeks individualistic autonomy by permanently separating himself, neglecting his responsibility, and disregarding the command of God. This is the third and final wedge that permanently divides the synecdochal Adam into the cursed male and female. They will no longer work jointly, but will be at odds with each other: “Your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you” (3:16).

Genesis 4:1 shows that Eve is grateful for her son’s birth because finally she has “procured a man.” This further displays the wedge between her and Adam and her displeasure at his passive masculinity. While expressing her gratitude for God’s provision, Adam is dismissed. He becomes an absentee father, failing to be the man Eve needs. Ironically, in Eve’s exclamation about the birth of Cain, she is excited that she has received a man with “the help of the Lord.”³⁹ This suggests Adam is no longer helping Eve, has failed his test and disappeared.

³⁸ Brown et al., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 1074.

³⁹ While the literal Hebrew simply says “with YHWH,” the ESV and NIV translate the idiom as “with the help of the Lord.” Therefore it is not a direct correlation with the helpmate of Genesis 2:18. However, Eve’s emphasis is upon the Lord’s work, and not on Adam, for her procurement of Cain.

Adamic Passivity

Once Adam fails to embody biblical masculinity, he begins to develop a fallen form of masculinity. Instead of being obedient, serving and committed, he embraces the fallen form that avoids the will of God, neglects responsibility and establishes a self-absorbed independence. The faithlessness of Adam (Hosea 6:7) is the passivity of the *sad-clown*.

Adam demonstrates through passive disengagement the failures of men. As Eve is challenged by the serpent, Adam silently wrestles with his insecurity in the face of chaos. Having forgotten his primary and unique responsibilities, he chooses to hide in the shadows rather than move into corrective action. When confronted with the challenging opportunity to display obedience, servanthood and commitment, Adam distorts God's creation by avoiding, neglecting and separating. He responds to man's gnawing question, "Am I good enough?" with a silent "no."

Genesis 4: The Failure of Cainite Hyper-Masculinity

Seeing the destructive impact of his father's passivity, Adam's son swings the pendulum to the other extreme form of fallen masculinity. Cain, like his father, fails in his expression of biblical masculinity. His failures are not due to passivity, but to hyper-masculinity. He does not fail to cling to the feminine, but fails to bond with his brother. He does not neglect his responsibility for the created order, but aggressively dominates it. Finally, he does not disregard God's will through avoidance, but challenges it through impulsive violence. For Cain, aggression, violence and pride expose the same insecurity embodied by his father, just in its

opposite form: “You can tell how fragile a boy is by how ferociously he fights over his autonomy.”⁴⁰ Cain is as fragile as his father.

As we are introduced to Adam’s son, Cain, “the storyteller prepares us for the dominance of Cain.”⁴¹

1. He is the first-born.
2. His name is derived from קין which means “to create.”
3. Cain worked (עבד) the ground.

As the first-born, Cain is provided with a position of power within the family.⁴² He also has a name that implies virility and action. The dominance is incomplete, however, because Cain is also exposed as only fulfilling half of the tasks assigned to Adam (Gen 2:15). Cain works (עבד) the soil, but requires a helpmate for the care for the flocks. Therefore, Cain's masculinity is under threaten because he does not complete God's dual task of עבד and שומר. Feeling inadequate, Cain responds with homicidal aggression.

However, this threat comes from an unlikely rival in his shepherding brother. In contrast to Cain's dominant masculinity, Abel (הבל) appears to be the weaker of the two brothers as his name means “vapor/nothingness” and he is the second born.⁴³ Joel Lohr identifies Abel as an ancillary character: “Abel is spoken of only in relation to Cain, and the reader cannot help feeling that his role is only a foil to Cain’s. The story, without a doubt, is about Cain and God.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson, *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2000), 121.

⁴¹ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 55-6.

⁴² Pamela Tamarkin Reis, “What Cain Said: A Note on Genesis 4.8,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 27, no. 1 (September 1, 2002): 107.

⁴³ Brown et al., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 210-211.

⁴⁴ Joel Lohr, “Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain: Genesis 4:1-16 in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the New Testament,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (2009): 494.

It is Cain who has the center stage to reclaim Adam's failures through his response to this threat. Cain is therefore given the perfect opportunity to temper his dominant masculinity.

Unfortunately, it is in between these relationships, God-Cain and Abel-Cain, that sin devours Cain. As a result, a second generation of masculinity is distorted. However, unlike Adam's passive sin, for Cain, sin is an aggressive force ready to ambush him.⁴⁵ It comes through the powerful force of entitlement: "Cain was convinced of his superiority in Abel in all matters, material and spiritual. Cain's rejection was thus totally unexpected; he was curious due to the deflation of his self-esteem." Cain therefore embodies the term *asshole* as he displays a man's entitled sense of superiority that trumps the needs of others. The result is that he responds impulsively to God, acts aggressively, and violently separates himself from his familial responsibility. These become the traits of Cainite hyper-masculinity:

1. Impulsivity rather than obedience
2. Aggression rather than protection
3. Egotistical individualism rather than commitment

Impulsivity

Just as the reader is not told why God set the tree of knowledge in the garden, the narrator also fails to explain why God favors Abel's offering over Cain's. The capricious nature of God seems troublesome, but it is not the concern of the writer. Instead, the focus is on Cain's response to God's slight: "So Cain was very angry, and his face fell" (Gen 4:5). Anger consumes Cain and he takes his eyes off God. Rather than keeping his attention upon God, his "face fell."

In this state of anger and depression, Cain fails to hear the fatherly concern of God (4:6-7). God encourages Cain to reflect and understand his emotions in light of this crucible:

⁴⁵ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 57.

“Only God himself, the ‘rejecter’ so to speak, acknowledges the hurt. Instead of reprimanding Cain for his emotional reaction, He shows fatherly concern....God is encouraging Cain to ask himself [why are you distressed], to reflect and understand his emotions.”⁴⁶ As psychologists Kindlon and Thompson argued earlier, Cain is receiving the emotional instruction of a father figure. However, Cain fails to obey God and reflect upon his emotional reactions.

Furthermore, Cain receives a command: to master (תָּמַשׁ) sin. If he does what is “right,” he will be uplifted, which will produce a newly gained self-confidence “as a springboard for growth and accomplishment.”⁴⁷ By encouraging Cain to master sin, God is offering him a challenge to develop an emotionally resilient and restrained form of masculinity,⁴⁸ one that will be acquired through adversity.⁴⁹

By doing what is right, Cain will serve and protect the community around him. God’s command—like the one given to Adam—provides Cain the opportunity to live out biblical masculinity by becoming obedient to God. Yet, also like Adam, Cain disregards this command. Cain rejects the possibility of demonstrating his biblical masculinity through the acceptance of the crucible.⁵⁰ Rather than obeying, Cain impulsively misdirects his anger towards his brother.

The murder scene is immediate: “Cain spoke against Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him” (4:8). Evil speech results

⁴⁶ Chaya Greenberger, “Cain and Abel: Mis(managing) Rejection and Unmet Expectations,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly (Online)* 44, no. 2 (April 2016): 117.

⁴⁷ Greenberger, “Cain and Abel: Mis(managing) Rejection and Unmet Expectations,” 118.

⁴⁸ Consistent with the earlier argument that men need conversion, challenge and community, God provides Cain with a challenge by pointing towards the sin that is waiting to devour him.

⁴⁹ Brueggemann identifies קָנָה as the root for Cain, which translates as “to get” or “acquire.” Embedded in the name of Cain is the implication of adverse struggle.

Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 56.

⁵⁰ Greenberger, “Cain and Abel: Mis(managing) Rejection and Unmet Expectations,” 119.

in evil action.⁵¹ Cain, having been turned downcast, now rises up (קָיַם), not against sin, but against his brother. His actions, like his father, are misdirected. He becomes actively disobedient through his impulsivity.

The *Brown-Dryer-Briggs Lexicon* defines קָיַם with a sense of immediacy, suddenness and hostility.⁵² Unlike Adam, Cain acts, but his actions are sudden and hostile. Walter Brueggemann captures the impulsiveness of Cain's murder: "Cain's resolution [is] handled tersely by the narrative (v. 8). It is over and done and nothing need be said. Waiting sin has had its dangerous way. Cain has not ruled but has been ruled overcoming the lust that lies in ambush."⁵³ Unlike Adam's passive avoidance, Cain impulsively disregards God's command, choosing to respond impulsively with misdirected aggression.

Aggression

Cain's second failure is the manner in which he responds. The rejection by God that Cain feels manifests in aggression. While Cain was successful in his tilling of the soil (עָבַד), so much so that he produces an abundant crop, he fails in the second command "to protect" (שָׁמַר). Ironically, Abel—as a shepherd—would have helped to bring completion to their dual tasks of עָבַד and שָׁמַר. Rather than embracing his brother's help, Cain feels threatened and uses his explosive aggression to divide. Rather than serving and protecting, Cain actively denigrates God's creation by causing the first recorded death. The promise of death, which is threatened through the insecurity of knowing good and evil, infiltrates humanity and is now fulfilled.

⁵¹ An exhaustive study of Cain's speech is covered by Reis, "What Cain Said: A Note on Genesis 4.8."

⁵² Brown et al., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 878.

⁵³ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 60.

Aggression drives Cain to react in a deadly manner. Cain's actions are not a controlled form of strength that serves and protects the created order. They are instead an explosion of *ruthless violence* (הרג): "The murder itself functions as the primal scene in which an aspect of human aggression is disclosed. After he has left the paradisiacal place of Eden, Man shows his true face. The explosion of murderous aggression forms the *fait primitif* of man and stands at the beginning of human culture."⁵⁴ This ruthless violence is the manner in which Cain's disobedience is enacted.

Furthermore, Cain fails to live up to his name's meaning, as he does not "forge"⁵⁵ or "create"⁵⁶ life, but actively destroys life. Cain displays low command over his anger through his aggressive outburst. While Adam failed to serve and protect through negligence, his son is active in the destruction resulting in an egoistical individualism.

Egotistical Individuality

While Adam's trial (2:9-12) was a defensive, self-centered exchange, Cain's is a terse dismissal of God (v.9). The way in which Cain responds to God's questioning highlights his egotism. Cain replies: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (שׂמִרָה). His pejorative use of שׂמִרָה reflects Cain's dismissal of God's command recorded in Genesis 2:15. The murderous rage explodes not only in action but also in an aggressive dismissal of his responsibility to be his brother's protector. Rather than working jointly with his brother, Cain becomes divisively competitive, destroying their familial relationship.

⁵⁴ De Vleminck, "Oedipus and Cain: Brothers in Arms," 22.

⁵⁵ Brown, et al., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 883.

⁵⁶ Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation*, 56.

While Adam casts blame elsewhere, Cain's lack of remorse reveals a self-absorbed individual who responds out of impulsive aggression when he is slighted by God. A brotherly adversarial relationship emerges that is perpetuated through future masculinities:

Perhaps the most distinctive quality that males exhibit is...“adversativeness” or *agonism* (Greek: *agon* “contest”). The male tendency to fight seems almost universal...Men fight over women, debate ideas, argue over fine points of law...and compete with each other in myriads of games just for the pure fun of it.⁵⁷

Cain becomes physically combative, severing relations with his brother, and is then verbally combative with God.

These divisions occur because Cain's ego has been bruised by his brother's favor. A distorted relationship results. In verse 8, the Hebrew repeats the earlier introduction of Abel as Cain's brother (v.2): “It is only at the moment of the murder that the words *אחיו* and *הבל* are joined again as if to remind us of Cain's firstborn rights and his bruised ego because of the way the sacrifices were received.”⁵⁸ This reminds the reader of the familial relationship being severed by Cain's actions (v. 8) and comments (v. 9).

While the familial connection to Abel is reintroduced, its reordering shows that the relationship has changed. Priority shifts from the “brother” (*אחיו*) to the “vapid nothingness” (*הבל*). There is therefore a reversal of “the initial combination *הבל אחיו* into *אחיו הבל*. Whereas the brother was initially the prime element in the construction, this function now belongs to the ambiguous *הבל*. Right before the murder, the text already signals the disastrous outcome: the youngest brother vanishes into thin air.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Arnold, *Wildmen, Warriors, and Kings*, 31.

⁵⁸ Karolien Vermeulen, “Mind the Gap: Ambiguity in the Story of Cain and Abel,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 1 (2014): 40-41.

⁵⁹ Vermeulen, “Mind the Gap,” 40-41.

Their binding union is deemphasized grammatically and is dramatically removed by Cain's actions. This grammatical shift highlights Cain's actions. They separate Cain from a committed relationship with his brother, and ultimately with God, thereby permanently isolating him.

This third characteristic of Cain, his combative divisiveness, weakens him into an insecure man. He is no longer relationally bound to another man, nor is there a male companion to complete the social tasks in which Cain is deficient. In his pleas for mercy (4:13-14), Cain emphasizes his singleness utilizing similarly "I" saturated statements expressed by Adam. Cain becomes just as self-absorbed as his father.

He is worried that someone will use the same ruthless violence (הרג) that he displayed upon his brother. His egotistical sense of entitlement means he desires companionship only for his self-preservation. Cain's impulsive aggressiveness results in him struggling alone under the weight of punishment he cannot bear alone (4:13). He has failed to demonstrate biblical masculinity, and has instead embraced the hyper-masculinity of an asshole.

Cainite Hyper-Masculinity

While the scene opened with Cain and Abel mutually fulfilling the tasks of serving and protecting, in the end Cain demonstrates a hyper-masculinity that destroys companionship. The unexplained success of Abel's offering incites Cain's hyper-masculinity, because it threatens Cain's security. Like Adam's failures, Cain is forced to wonder "am I good enough" when he sees Abel receiving God's favor. Yet unlike Adam, who silently hides, Cain tries to overcompensate by proving his strength in an aggressive manner that will eradicate the perceived

threat. He responds rashly, with misdirected aggression, which ultimately isolates him. The way of Cain (Jude 1:11) is the way of the *asshole*.

In the end, Cain, like his father, has become an aimless wanderer lacking meaning and purpose. Adam and Cain become the primary male archetypes struggling to demonstrate a biblical masculinity. They embody instead an insecure masculinity that either shrinks into the shadows to avoid responsibility or impulsively rises up to prove itself. Cain therefore responds to man's gnawing question, "Am I good enough?" with a violent, primal, and resounding "no."

Flawed Masculinity after the Garden

The primal cries of both Adam and Cain echo throughout scripture. They become patterns of behavior for future men. Hosea 6:7 describes Israel and Judah as having followed the faithlessness of Adam, while Jude 1:11 notices that there are those who "walk in the way of Cain."

With the pattern of flawed masculinity spilling beyond the first family, the same emotional responses emerge: hubris and shame. Lamech, Cain's son, pushes his father's hyper-masculinity to the extreme in his boastful speech and sexual promiscuity (Gen 4:19-24). Balaam and Korah display active disobedience and egotistical rebellion. Ultimately, both Adamic passivity and Cainite hyper-masculinity culminate in a hubris that distorts a man's understanding

of himself. It either turns outward into the egotistical entitlement of the asshole, or inward as the egotistical self-loathing of the sad-clown.⁶⁰

When both Adam and Cain are questioned by God, their shame in discovering the answer that “No, you are not good enough” becomes their mode of relating to God. Discovering that neither are good enough, this barrier of shame emerges. Though opposite in their reactions, both Adam and Cain are bonded by shame.

Gershen Kaufman notes that shame causes a phenomenological response of feeling seen: “exposure is an inherent feature of the inner experience of shame.”⁶¹ Adam therefore moves from being naked and unashamed (Gen 2:25) to hiding and covering (2:7-8). Also, Kaufman notes that the facial signs of shame are when “the head hangs [and] the eyes are lowered or averted.”⁶² Likewise, Cain covers his shame by dropping his head (4:6) and responding defensively to God (4:9). Shame consumes both Adam and Cain.

With this pattern established by the first two male characters in scripture, what emerges is that the masculinity demonstrated throughout the Bible is not what God intended. The rest of the

⁶⁰ In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis shows how both egotism and self-loathing originate from the same issues of obsession of the self. Tim Keller continues this idea when he writes, “If we were to meet a truly humble person. . . we would never come away from meeting them thinking they were humble. They would not be always telling us they were a nobody (because a person who keeps saying they are a nobody is actually a self-obsessed person). The thing we would remember from meeting a truly gospel-humble person is how much they seemed to be totally interested in us. Because the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less.”

Timothy Keller, *The Freedom of Self Forgetfulness: The Path to the True Christian Joy* (Leyland, UK: 10Publishing, 2012).

⁶¹ Gershen Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame-Based Syndromes* (New York, NY: Springer, 1996), 28.

⁶² Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame*, 28.

biblical characters reveal deviant forms of masculinity that either tends towards passivity or hyper-masculinity.⁶³

For example, in Judges 6:12ff, although God calls Gideon a “mighty warrior,” Gideon shows his passive tendencies: “Gideon appears, however, as a fearful, relatively unimportant man, who does not want to fight and hence a much less masculine figure.”⁶⁴ When an angel tells Gideon that the Lord is with him (6:12), Gideon suggests that God has not equipped him and the people should find a Moses-level rescuer.⁶⁵ Rather than taking responsibility, Gideon seeks to abdicate his role by claiming to be inadequate (6:15).

When Gideon does act, he utilizes the cover of night to destroy Baal’s altars and the Asherah poles. Though he follows God’s command, he avoids direct confrontation because of fear (v. 27). Then, instead of taking responsibility, “Gideon...fades into the background as a scared wimp as the consequences unfold.”⁶⁶ Gideon’s struggle to reject passivity, take responsibility and lead courageously shows his tendency towards Adamic passivity. While Gideon shows a man who is hesitant to live into his calling as God’s mighty warrior, David reveals a man whose growing sense of entitlement distorts his masculinity.

David shows his Cainite hyper-masculinity through violence, promiscuous sex and adultery, and his short-lived grief over Absalom’s death. David Clines suggests that the “essential male characteristic” for David is being a man of war (אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה). Unlike Gideon who hesitates,

⁶³ At this point it is necessary to address the issue of the Second Adam (Rom 5:12-21). The three attributes assigned to Adam are later demonstrated by Jesus. He is obedient to God’s will (Matt 26:42), works to serve and protect through the redemption of the world (Matt 20:28) and is sacrificially committed to his bride (Eph 5:26). Therefore Jesus’s life, death and resurrection fulfill God’s design for all men. Does that mean that men are free to wallow in their Adamic passivity or fight out their Cainite masculinity? By no means! (Rom 6:1-2).

⁶⁴ Haddox, “‘The Lord is with You, You Mighty Warrior,’” 79.

⁶⁵ Timothy Keller, *Judges for You* (Purceyville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2013), 73-74.

⁶⁶ Haddox, “The Lord is with You, You Mighty Warrior,” 80.

Clines calculates David's body count to be about 140,000 plus the fifteen deaths that he personally participates in.⁶⁷

Not only is David aggressive, but also he displays hyper-sexuality. He has sexual intercourse with at least twenty women, but is "not very interested in sex."⁶⁸ Sex is merely a matter of conquest and ownership. When David feels threatened because he cannot receive what he feels entitled to—namely Bathsheba—he responds with Cainite hyper-masculinity to prove his masculinity and eradicate the threat of Uriah (2 Samuel 11).

Finally, when David's son dies, he shows a lack of emotional responsiveness, capstoning his hyper-masculinity: "If men of David's time are to be strong, David's response to the child's death is the ultimate macho act, the fitting conclusion to a narrative of aggressive masculinity that began with the rape of Bathsheba and continued with the cynical disposal of her husband."⁶⁹ Having his masculinity threatened, David responds without emotion, and with aggression and a hyper-sexuality.

The narrative then moves back to another passive man, King Ahab, who displays Adamic passivity when he is unable to purchase Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 19). With his masculinity under threat, Ahab responds by going "home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.' He lay on his bed sulking and refusing to eat" (1 Kgs 19:4). Because he is unable to procure the vineyard, Ahab's wife confronts him. His depression causes her to question his masculinity and she ultimately joins Eve in taking inappropriate action because of her husband's inaction.

⁶⁷ Clines, "David the Man," 5-6.

⁶⁸ Clines, "David the Man," 30.

⁶⁹ Clines, "David the Man," 10.

Because of the precarious nature of masculinity, when a man is threatened he tends toward Adamic passivity or Cainite hyper-masculinity. From the archetypal stories of Adam and Cain in Genesis 3 and 4, there emerges a pattern of masculinity that moves along a continuum between these polarities. When threatened, a man may tilt towards the silence of Adam or overcompensate with the aggression of Cain. Unfortunately, self-mastery is not possible through moral training. Crucibles do not absolve sin; instead they expose the Adamic and Cainite sin tendencies within a man, and create a broken and contrite environment for the seed of the Gospel to take root.

Table 6. Characteristics Associated with Biblical Archetypes

Adamic Passivity	Cainite Hyper-Masculinity	Biblical Masculinity
Avoidance	Impulsivity	Obedience
Negligence	Aggression	Servanthood
Isolating Individuality	Divisive Individuality	Clinging Commitment

Consequences

Building on the earlier research about men's responses to their precarious masculinity, this section has shown the specific characteristics embedded in the archetypes from a Biblical perspective. By identifying the passivity and hyper-masculinity continuum with man's fallen disorder, the preceding research has been located within a Biblical worldview. This suggests that there is a normative quality to how men respond to existential threats.

Also, by focusing upon Genesis 1-4 as an archetypal story, these characteristics are revealed as transcending the individual Biblical characters and as intrinsic to every man.⁷⁰ This chapter thus confirms Bosson and Vandello's research that precarious masculinity not only transcends cultures, as demonstrated by Gilmore, but also that "this is not a 'new' deficit that men must deal with; in fact, it is one that is treated much more explicitly in many cultures than it is in the United States. The ubiquity of precarious manhood beliefs across time and place suggest that they may even be the product of evolved selection pressures."⁷¹ When men are confronted with a threat—like those of their Biblical exemplars—the existential struggle between their masculinities emerges. This means men need threshold events that help expose their masculine tendencies towards passivity or hyper-masculinity.

Rather than establishing a singular form of masculinity, presenting three biblical archetypes suggests there is a fluidity to masculinity.⁷² Cultures and individual men are hybrids of these forms of masculinity as each struggles to reject passivity and tame hyper-masculinity. Men are sons of Adam and followers of the way of Cain. Adam and Cain show that the crucible experiences a man undergoes will display which extreme is more prevalent in his life. This chapter therefore provides a biblical lens for self-evaluation: Is a man more Adamic, or is he more Cainite?

Finally, the persistent failure of men through Adamic passivity or Cainite masculinity foreshadows the need for a man who can complete the hero's quest and reintegrate all men with

⁷⁰ This research is primarily focused upon Western, middle-upper-class, married men living in a post-industrial, post-feminist society. However every culture elevates one form of flawed masculinity as the hegemonic norm. Geert Hofstede and David Gilmore's cross-cultural studies show how these are embedded in different cultures.

⁷¹ Jennifer K. Bosson and Joseph A. Vandello, "Manhood, Womanhood, and the Importance of Context: A Reply to Commentaries," *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 14 (April 2013): 126.

⁷² "It is clear from the new social research as a whole that there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere. We need to speak of 'masculinities,' not masculinity."

Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 10.

the feminine. This man would be the Son of God who shows a new way. This new Adam conquers this internal struggle for men. In doing so, this new Adam can answer the persistent question of men and return them to the synecdochal Adam, who lives not in animosity toward, but in unity with the feminine. This is possible when the existential threat has been conquered through this new Adam, revealing that “there is no longer...male and female, for you are all one in Christ” (Gal 3:28).

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Who are you among men?

— Homer, *Odyssey*

Having noted the precarious nature of a masculinity that has to be earned, as well as the Biblical foundation for masculinity, a research method was developed to explore the function of crucible events as mechanisms for developing an authentic Biblical masculinity and thereby increasing male participation in the church. Three tools were used to conduct this experiment: an online survey, an online personality assessment, and follow-up interviews.

Participants: One hundred and eleven men responded to the researcher's advertisements on social media, and participated in an online survey and personality assessment. The first section of the assessment was a fourteen-question survey developed from the research of this surrounding project, while the second section involved a 175-question personality assessment based on the Factor-Five model,¹ also called the Advanced Multidimensional Personality Matrix

¹ David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2005), 240.

Murrow references the research of Mels Carbonnel. Carbonnel's research is based upon the DiSC profile summary. Carbonnel says that 85 percent of men in the local church have passive personality types. However, after speaking with him, it was discovered that his analysis is based upon DiSC profile summaries. His assumption is that only men who score a high-D have "agentic" personalities, while the majority are S and C types, who he identified as "passive." In a phone interview in July 2015, the researcher felt this method seemed too simplistic for present purposes, and would not provide enough detail to produce masculinity scores. The researcher was unable to find a normed masculinity test, and so purchased the *AMPM* assessment through www.archprofile.com. This assessment was selected because of the extensive number of traits it covers, plus the availability of a normed sample. Such extensive detail offered the possibility of forming composite scores for masculinity based upon this author's earlier research. It uses the Factor-Five personality test which has become the "standard technique of psychometrics," as noted by Hannes Grassegger and Mikael Krogerus in "The Data That Turned the World Upside Down," *VICE*, last modified January 28, 2017, accessed March 1, 2017, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/how-our-likes-helped-trump-win.

(*AMPM* 3rd Revision). Participants who completed the *AMPM* assessment were given their detailed personality assessment free of charge.

Nineteen respondents' results were deleted because they failed to complete both parts of the assessment. The assessment thus produced ninety-three participants ranging in age from twenty-three to sixty. Of these, sixty-one men said they participated in F3, while thirty-two had no affiliation with F3.

These participants' scores on the personality test were gathered and compared with the psychometric report provided by PsychTests against which the personality assessment was normed. The psychometric report gave the average scores for 329 men, producing baselines numbers for the average man.

Upon completion of the two survey tools, thirty-two men were identified for follow up interviews based upon three criteria; namely, willingness to grant follow-up interviews, participation in F3, and the fact that they had undergone an intentional physical challenge within the past two years. Twelve of those thirty-two men responded to the follow-up questions. One man was requested to follow up on his dramatic shift from a zero to four score on his male community scores, but then opted not to participate further.

Procedure

Recruitment: Participants were recruited through email and social media, namely Twitter and Facebook. They were directed to a website (www.wbbarry.com/research) to register, and told that this research, which is confidential, would examine “masculinity, self-confidence, and the impact of crucible events in a man’s life.”

Men were given log-in credentials via email in order to complete the assessment online. The email stated they would be participating in “research to study the impact of challenges in a man’s life.” Participants were given a randomized Session ID as the only identifiable way of comparing their survey results with the *AMPM* scores. They were also informed that they would be completing two tests that would last approximately thirty minutes.

Due to the nature of the recruitment, registration, length of survey and anonymity, participation was optional and entirely self-motivated. Participants were told that they might quit the assessments at any time, without the data being saved, if they became uncomfortable with the questions.

Online Survey

The survey first asked for demographic details of the participant.

Age Range:

- *Question 1: What is your age range?*
- Options: <22, 23-27, 28-32, 33-37, 38-42, 43-47, 48-52, 53-60, 61+

Table 7. Age Range and Levinson’s Seasons of a Man’s Life.

AGE	<22	23-27	28-32	33-37	38-42	43-47	48-52	53-60	60+
Levinson Categories	Pre-Adult	Novice	Age 30 transition	Becoming one’s own man	Age 40 transition	Settling Down	Late Adulthood Transition	Leaving a Mark	Late Adult Era

These age categories were selected based upon the structure-changing and structure-building stages in Daniel Levinson's *Seasons of a Man's Life*. Levinson argues that every man goes through six to seven years of structure-building and four to five years of structure-changing

stages.² This researcher wanted to examine which stage the man was in when the crucible events occurred.

Denominational Affiliation:

- *Question 2: Select the type of church community you participate in.*
- Options: Non-denominational, Roman Catholic, Baptist (Southern), Baptist (American, Cooperative), Lutheran, Pentecostal, Church of Christ, Presbyterian/Reformed (PCUSA/ECO/RCA), Presbyterian/Reformed (PCA/EPC/OPC/ARP), Methodist, Episcopalian, Eastern Orthodox, Other, Non-Christian, Do Not Know, Do Not Participate

While not exhaustive, the denominations listed were selected in an attempt to determine whether participants were members of denominations with egalitarian or non-egalitarian views of leadership. The categories followed a similar structure to Morrow's research by denomination on gender gapped churches.³ The egalitarian churches were identified as: Baptist (American), Lutheran, Presbyterian/Reformed (PCUSA/ECO/RCA), Methodist, and Episcopalian. When respondents selected ambiguous affiliations (i.e., non-denominational), they were categorized as "unknown" in the research data.

Table 8. Number of Responders in Egalitarian Churches

Egalitarianism	Yes	No	Unknown	Not Applicable
Survey Responses	56	12	19	6

Of the fifty-six participants who identified themselves as part of an egalitarian church,

² Daniel Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 49.

³ While Murrow points to a correlation between gender gap and decline in the mainline churches, he does not suggest direct causation in his book. It is nevertheless interesting to note that the three mainline churches with the largest gender gap are also egalitarian in their leadership structures. In email exchanges with the researcher, Murrow confirmed the analysis that "when women are permitted to lead, male leadership erodes even further." This would also confirm Bosson's precarious manhood theory.

David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 55.

twelve were Methodist, thirty-three were Presbyterian/Reformed (PCUSA/ECO/RCA), and nine were Episcopalian.

Frequency of Church Participation:

- *Question 3: How often do you participate in a local faith community?*
- Options: Weekly, 2-3 times per month, Monthly, A few times per year, Holidays, Rarely, Never

F3 Participation:

- *Question 4: Are you an F3 Participant? Have you ever posted⁴ to an F3 (f3nation.com) workout?*
- Options: Yes, No

Length of F3 involvement options:

- *Question 5: How long have you been part of F3 (if applicable)?*
- Options: < 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, 1-2 years, 2+ years

After gathering this demographic data, participants were asked about crucible events and their impact. While a holistic understanding views all crucibles as having influence on every aspect of a person's life, these crucibles were presented in a way that would cause the men to examine particular challenges through a primary lens.⁵ They were told:

Below are lists of major life events that people experience. Please select any of the challenges you have experienced in the past two years (whether on-going or completed). The lists below are suggestions; you may include any additional event(s) under the "other" section.

Crucible Events are severe trials in a man's life in which different elements interact to produce something new. They are seasons of extreme challenge,

⁴ "Posted" is a term within the F3 community meaning "To appear and participate in a Workout or any other Event."

"Lexicon," *F3nation*, n.d., accessed February 24, 2017, <http://f3nation.com/lexicon>.

⁵ Later discussion will focus on the limitation of forcing life events into specific crucible categories. A holistic understanding of the self argues that every crucible impacts the full life of the participant. Job-loss, for example, not only affects a participant's profession, but his relationships, his emotions and even his physical self. However, by providing these forced responses within each category, participants were given a primary lens through which they could view these challenges.

uncertainty, and unsettling in order that a man might choose to continue down the same life trajectory or head in a new direction.

While each category offered an open ended-selection, it also offered suggestions to encourage participants to isolate their crucibles in a particular category.

Crucible Events:

- *Physical*
 - *Question 6: What physical challenges have you faced in the past two years?*
 - Options: relocation, cancer, major illness, athletic competition, major injury or accident, other: _____
- *Emotional*
 - *Question 7: What emotional challenges have you faced in the past two years?*
 - Options: depression, addiction, anxiety, illness/death of a loved one, other: _____
- *Spiritual*
 - *Question 8: What spiritual challenges have you faced in the past two years?*
 - Options: conversion, left faith, changed churches, apathy, other: _____
- *Vocational*
 - *Question 9: What vocational challenges have you faced in the past two years?*
 - Options: career change, unemployment, lack of ambition or direction, financial pressures, other: _____
- *Relational*
 - *Question 10: What relational challenges have you faced in the past two years?*
 - Options: got married, divorce/separation, significant breakup, birth of child(ren), infertility, caretaker of aging adult, parenting struggles, other: _____

There was no attempt to judge the validity of the men's crucible experiences. It was determined that if the participant felt that the challenge(s) they faced qualified in one of these categories, it was sufficient. Most men had experienced professional, physical and spiritual crucibles, while many also had emotional and relational examples to draw upon. The intention of this section was that the men would spend a moment reflecting upon recent challenges prior to

taking their personality assessment. This, hopefully, would subconsciously highlight the precarious nature of their masculinity, either by having it threatened or confirmed, depending upon the way they viewed their crucible experiences.

The data was then further divided by the researcher to determine if some of these crucibles could be isolated as intentional crucibles, such as choosing to participate in an obstacle race or marathon. This provided another way of examining the crucible category as intentional (63 participants) and unintentional (30 participants).

Having identified the crucibles the men had faced over the past two years, participants were asked to rate the level of male community in their lives during and after the crucibles by checking all answers that applied during and after the event:

Male Community:

- *Question 11: During those crucible events, did you have:*
 - a mentor—yes, no, not sure
 - a mentee—yes, no, not sure
 - a male friend you could call at 3 a. m. in an emergency—yes, no, not sure
 - an all-male community group—yes, no, not sure
- *Question 12: Do you currently have:*
 - a mentor—yes, no, not sure
 - a mentee—yes, no, not sure
 - a male friend you could call at 3 a. m. in an emergency—yes, no, not sure
 - an all male community group—yes, no, not sure

A “yes” was given a score of 1; a “no” and “not sure” were given a score of 0. Those scores were recorded for each type of male relationship. Then a fifth score was calculated by adding them together. This score was labeled as an “overall male community” score. The mean was 2.28 for during crucible events, and 2.48 for after crucible events. Finally, men who scored higher than 1.0 for their current overall male community score during their crucible were

identified as having a “Male Community” by the researcher, meaning that they had at least two male relationships in their life.

Impact:

- *Question 13: In the past 6 months, have you been more/less involved in these areas of your life when compared to the period prior to the crucible event(s)?*
 - Marriage
 - Parenting
 - Church
 - Work
 - Exercise
 - Community Causes (tutoring, homelessness, non-profits, etc.)
- *Question 14: In the next 6 months, do you plan to be more/less involved in these areas of your life:*
 - Marriage
 - Parenting
 - Church
 - Work
 - Exercise
 - Community Causes (tutoring, homelessness, non-profits, etc.)

Participants were asked to rank these six different categories from 5 (more likely) to 1 (less likely). The scores for future involvement (Question 14) were added together and then compared to the score for the past six months. This ratio became their future engagement scores. The mean score was 0.33 with 0 meaning no change. Likewise, their parenting, church and community causes scores were averaged and compared. This ratio became their future increased feminine engagement score. These last three categories were identified as places where male involvement is typically low.⁶ Creating this score allowed the researcher to examine if men

⁶ GuideStar’s 2011 *Nonprofit Compensation Report* stats that 75 percent of workers and volunteers are women in the non-profit sector. Also, Nuno S. Themudo’s research shows that non-profits have a higher percentage of women involved. The largest gender gaps are found in the areas of religion (7.11 percent), social services (3.92 percent), education and arts (2.99 percent).

Nuno Themudo, “Gender and the Nonprofit Sector,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 38 (April 17, 2009): 663–83.

would be more willing to enter female dominated environments such as child-rearing, church, schools and non-profits. The mean score was 0.52 with 0 meaning no change.

Big-5 Personality Assessment

After completing the survey, the men were given access to their *AMPM* detailed personality assessment. This provided numerical scores between 1 and 100 for five broad dimensions of personality, subdivided into thirty-five traits. In order to create measurable and comparable statistics for the three masculine archetypes, the thirty-five traits were classified into groups representing characteristics found in the Biblical Masculinity, Adamic and Cainite archetypes.⁷ Seventeen of the traits, such as curiosity, charm and creative thinking were neutral, and therefore eliminated from the data analysis.

This allowed for the remaining eighteen scores to be analyzed through the Biblical Masculinity rubric: dependability, trustfulness, kindness, orientation, sociability, self-discipline, assertiveness, striving, attention to detail, diligence, approachability, independence, impulse command, emotional reactivity, aggressiveness, anger command, egoism and dominance. The psychometric scores provided by ArchProfile became the norm against which this particular population of research participants could be compared.

⁷ Within this research three distinctive terms are used to differentiate the level of specificity and source of the descriptions provided. “Biblical Archetypes” is used to describe each participants masculine identity described in chapter 2 from the Biblical framework in chapter 3. “Characteristics” are the three attributes identified through the actions of Adam and Cain in the preceding chapter. “Traits” are the specific, measurable scales provided by the *AMPM* that make up each characteristic.

Table 9. Personality Traits associated with Characteristics Archetypal Forms

Archetype	Passive Masculinity	Hyper-Masculinity	Purposeful Masculinity
Characteristics	Avoidant	Impulsive	Obediently Active
	low Assertiveness	low Impulse Command	high Dependability
	low Striving	low Emotional Reactivity	high Trust
	Negligent	Aggressive	Servant Motivated
	low Attention to Detail	high Aggressiveness	high Kindness
	low Diligence	low Anger Command	high Orientation
	Isolating Individualism	Divisive Individualism	Communally Committed
	low Approachability	high Egoism	high Sociability
	high Independence	high Dominance	high Self-Discipline

Follow-Up Interviews

Once the ninety-three men's results were gathered, follow-up questions were extended to a subgroup of participants who agreed to be interviewed; who were participants in F3; and who had said they had intentionally participated in a physical challenge within the past two years.

Twelve men responded to five interview questions:

- *How has taking on intentional challenges (such as endurance races, physical workouts) prepared you to handle unexpected challenges (such as health issues, depression, job loss)?*
- *How has your participation in F3 impacted your relationships?*
- *How has your participation in F3 impacted your vocation (work/job)?*
- *How has your participation in F3 impacted your emotional health?*
- *How has your participation in F3 impacted your spiritual life?*

⁸ The traits highlighted in red are ones that have a negative correlation with the *AMPM* score.

The written responses (Appendix D) were sifted and sorted based upon the traits noticed with each Biblical archetype.

After this quantitative and qualitative data was collected, a statistical analysis calculated the correlations and associations between the Biblical Archetypes, crucible participation and F3 involvement. In order to provide statistical analysis, it was necessary for the researcher to create a way to provide a numerical score for each participant's Biblical archetype from the *AMPM* reports.

Biblical Archetype Scoring

Having classified the *AMPM* traits into the three Biblical archetypes, it was then possible to calculate three composite scores for each participant. These calculations produced a statistical score of a man's tendency towards Biblical Masculinity, and/or Adam and Cain characteristics.

Biblical Masculinity scores were produced by averaging the raw scores of each of these traits: dependability, trustfulness, kindness, orientation, sociability, and self-discipline. This produced a composite, which ranged from 82.33 to 38.83 within this population (mean=66.72). The higher the score, there is greater tendency towards Biblical Masculinity.

Adamic scores were produced by averaging the raw score of each of the following traits: assertiveness, striving, attention to detail, diligence, approachability and independence. However, since some of these traits, namely assertiveness, striving, attention to detail, diligence and approachability, were negatively associated with the Adamic characteristics, they had to be inverted. That means that those scores were subtracted from 100. As an example of this negative

correlation, a person with a raw score of 25 on assertiveness was given a score of 75.

Independence, however, was the only trait not inverted.

Averaging these scores produced a composite, which ranged from 59.33 to 24.67 within this population (mean=41.77). The higher the composite score, the greater the Adamic tendencies.

To calculate a Cainite score, the participants' impulse command and anger command scores were inverted. The remaining traits, emotional reactivity, aggressiveness, egoism, and dominance, were not. Averaging these scores produced a composite which ranged from 45.43 to 12.71 within this population (mean=29.07). The higher the score, there is greater Cainite tendencies.

Statistical Methods

The saved *AMPM* scores for the ninety-three participants were then linked to their earlier responses regarding F3 participation, crucibles, and their male community engagement. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to summarize the scores from the survey and *AMPM* from the different populations of participants in this study. Comparisons of scores across groups of participants were made using two-sample t-tests, and comparisons of proportions were made using chi-squared tests. Data were managed and analyzed using Numbers and findings with a p-value less than 0.05 were considered to be statistically significant, while p-value less than 0.07 were marginally significant.⁹

⁹ Though statistically p-values <0.05 are considered “moderately strong.” This research has chosen to highlight some p-values that are $p < 0.1$, because the psychometric report of the personality study itself labeled these as “marginal” (see Appendix C). Though statistically weak, the nature of this exploratory study and the corresponding qualitative data suggests that these figures are worth noting for further research.

Descriptive Characteristics¹⁰

The following section defines the *AMPM* traits used to form the traits associated with each archetype when calculating these composite scores. This is in order to explain why these traits were categorized within each characteristic and archetype. After organizing the data into these different archetypes, statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether there were any significant correlations in the data sets between crucible experiences and masculine archetypes. The results are presented in the next chapter.

Biblical Masculinity Archetype:

Obedience is measured based on a person's ability to follow through with expectations, their reliability, and their ability to trust in the authority to which they submit. People with a high opinion of the trustworthiness of their superiors, and also high reliability, tend to demonstrate obedience to commands.

The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Dependability and Trust. Someone who is dependable is reliable and responsible, while low scores are people who fail to live up to expectations and are inconsistent.¹¹ People with high trust scores are willing to give others benefit of doubt and will place trust in others until proven otherwise, while people with low scores are cynical.¹²

¹⁰ These descriptions are adapted from the Operational Definitions provided by *ArchProfile* for the *AMPM*. The full definitions are included as Appendix A.

¹¹ *AMPM – R3 (Advanced Multi-Dimensional Personality Matrix – Big Five Personality Test—3rd Revision) – Operational Definitions* (PsychTests AIM Inc., 2014), 3.

¹² *Operational Definitions*, 4.

Servanthood is observable in an orientation directed outwards as well as in a desire to help others. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Kindness and Orientation. Someone who scores high in kindness has a desire to help and is considerate of other's well-being, while low scores are often viewed as uncaring and indifferent.¹³ People with high orientation prefers to focus on others while low scores would rather deal with challenges on their own.¹⁴

Commitment is demonstrated through relational connection and determination to remain steadfast while confronting challenges. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Sociability and Self-Discipline. Someone who scores high on sociability will seek the company of others, while lower scores will prefer to be on their own.¹⁵ People who are self-discipline are able to control behavior and persevere through unpleasant tasks, while low scores tend to get sidetracked easily and need a push from others for motivation.¹⁶ By combining these two traits, a score for commitment emerges because they will overcome obstacles in order to remain relationally connected to others.

Adamic Archetype:

Avoidance can be seen in a person's tendency to be passive and unassertive due to a lack of personal motivation. This tendency is characterized by low levels of ambition and the forfeiting of personal desires. In calculating the avoidance tendency, the lower the score in assertiveness and striving, the higher the avoidance. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Assertiveness and Striving. Someone who is assertive presents their thoughts in a clear and self-assured manner, while low scores are intimidated and give in to others. People who are striving

¹³ *Operational Definitions*, 4.

¹⁴ *Operational Definitions*, 3.

¹⁵ *Operational Definitions*, 3.

¹⁶ *Operational Definitions*, 5.

are motivated to work towards self-improvement and achievement, while lower scores are content with the status quo.¹⁷

Negligence is demonstrated in an inability to complete tasks and a laissez-faire attitude towards responsibilities. Negligent people are “marked by a carelessly easy manner” and fail to exercise the care necessary to accomplish tasks.¹⁸ Higher levels of negligence are calculated through low scores in attention to detail and diligence. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Attention to Detail and Diligence. Someone with an attention to detail has the ability to focus and complete tasks, while low scores are often careless or ignore details.¹⁹ People who score high on diligence have a purposeful approach to work, while low scores put in minimum effort and are inconsistent.²⁰

Isolation is demonstrated in an inability to connect with others, and correlates with low approachability scores, and the stated desire not to be under the control of another person. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Independence and Approachability. Someone who shows independence are self-governing, while low scores will seek direction from others.²¹ People with high approachability scores present themselves as welcoming and easy to talk to, while lower scores do not endear themselves to others.²²

Cainite Archetype:

Impulsivity is demonstrated through a person’s lack of command over their desires and their inability to mute their emotional responses to challenges. Impulsivity is noticeable in a low

¹⁷ *Operational Definitions*, 5.

¹⁸ “Negligent,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, 2017, accessed March 1, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/negligent>.

¹⁹ *Operational Definitions*, 5.

²⁰ *Operational Definitions*, 5.

²¹ *Operational Definitions*, 2.

²² *Operational Definitions*, 3.

impulse command and a high emotional reactivity. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Impulse Command and Emotional Reactivity.

Someone with an impulse control will think through consequences before taking action, while low scores will act on impulse and often regret their actions.²³ People with high emotional reactivity will go from one extreme emotion to another easily, while lower scores show low variability in their emotions.²⁴

Aggression is demonstrated through hostility towards others and the inability to control anger. Therefore aggression is displayed through high levels of aggressiveness combined with low command over anger. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Aggressiveness and Anger Command. Someone with aggressiveness will become hostile when angry and are often intimidating, while low scores are more easygoing.²⁵ People with high anger command can regulate anger and control their temper while low scorers become angry even in minor situations.²⁶

Divisiveness is demonstrated when a person places their needs above another's and takes charge in order to attain that need. The *AMPM* describes these two traits as Egoism and Dominance. Someone with egoism will view their own interests and needs as superior to others, while low scores are humble.²⁷ People with high dominance scores want and need to be in control, while lower scores willing to share decision-making power.²⁸

²³ *Operational Definitions*, 2.

²⁴ *Operational Definitions*, 1.

²⁵ *Operational Definitions*, 2.

²⁶ *Operational Definitions*, 2.

²⁷ *Operational Definitions*, 4.

²⁸ *Operational Definitions*, 4.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

What kind of man am I?

— Kris Kristofferson, *What Kind of Man am I?*

Data Analysis

The data collected was examined to see how intentional crucibles catalyze male transformation, a process that is then sustained through participation in an all male community, such as F3, by confirming a man's precarious masculinity to the point where he is more likely to engage with the feminized environment of the egalitarian church.

The data analysis presented in this chapter evaluates the importance of crucible events in men's lives, and in strengthening male community bonds so that men might emerge as leaders in their homes, schools and communities. These results test the earlier argument by Leon Podles that men need to experience challenges in order to be changed, and that these crucible events result in deeper communal bonds. Men who are involved in all-male communities that intentionally challenge men with crucibles tend to increase their Biblical Masculinity characteristics, while at the same time experience a tempering of their tendencies towards Adamic passivity and Cainite hyper-masculinity.

Table 10. Responders categorized by Levinson's Categories

AGE	<22	23-27	28-32	33-37	38-42	43-47	48-52	53-60	60+
Levinson Categories	Pre-Adult	Novice	Age 30 transition	Becoming one's own man	Age 40 transition	Settling Down	Late Adulthood Transition	Leaving a Mark	Late Adult Era
Survey Responses	0	1	5	21	15	20	19	8	0

The majority of the men who participated in this study fell near Daniel Levinson's "Age 40 Transition" stage. Of the ninety-three participants, fifty-six fell into these transitional categories. Similarly, F3 has discovered that many of the men report looking for meaning and purpose at this mid-stage: "Too many men were lost out here at the midpoint wondering what they'd gotten themselves into, losing the will to drive forward, questioning why they'd come so far when the finish line seemed so far away."¹ The Mid-Life Transition is a critical season of a man's life where he evaluates the life he has built, decides what to retain, or reverts back by rebuilding a new life structure. "At around 40 a crucial development change occurs. Early adulthood is coming to an end and a new season begins to make itself felt. The Mid-Life Transition, which lasts from about 40 to 45, is devoted to the termination of early adulthood and the initiation of middle adulthood. It is thus part of both eras."²

This research happened to draw heavily upon the experiences of men near the mid-life transition zone, which was an interesting group of men to study. Unlike collegiate men, these men have already established a life-structure. Also unlike mature men, this structure is still in the process of transition. Though there was no statistical correlation between a man's age and

¹ David Redding and Tim Whitmire, *Freed To Lead: F3 and the Unshackling of the Modern-Day Warrior* (Charlotte, NC: Iron Project, 2014), 139.

² Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1978), 23.

archetypal tendency, statistical significance was noticed in terms of crucible experiences and archetypal tendency.

Table 11. Percentage of participants identifying a crucible experience.

Crucible	Response
Physical	77.7%
Emotional	55.3%
Spiritual	74.5%
Vocational	80.9%
Relational	62.8%

The research defined crucibles as events that challenge men physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally and vocationally.

Examples of intentional physical crucibles are endurance races, obstacle races and boot camps. Some other intentional crucibles mentioned by participants include self-motivated career changes or professional advancements, planned pregnancies,³ marriage, conversion and church changes. Unintentional crucibles tend to be events that befall men, such as apathy, depression, job-loss, cancer, addictions, and familial struggles.

By separating challenges into intentional and unintentional categories, the researcher was able to see the impact deliberate challenges have upon a man. This is a fundamental component of F3 that seeks to surround men with a communal bond as they tackle intentional physical challenges. Their website says:

Our workouts are open to men of all fitness levels and are organized to keep the entire group together while ensuring a thorough beatdown for all participants. Our model, in which leadership of the workout varies from day to day and week to week, means that workout leaders...are constantly introducing new exercises and ways of doing them. Because participants are challenged and pushed in new ways every day, they achieve an all-around fitness that makes F3 guys supremely fit for

³ The survey included the option “birth of a child”; however that failed to differentiate planned births from unexpected pregnancies. Three factors would suggest that the birth of child was an intentional crucible: if the father was actively trying to impregnate his wife, the child was not aborted, and the father stayed committed to parenting this child. The limitation of crucible categories will be acknowledged in the final chapter. With regard to these results, the researcher was able to confirm that the participant had intentionally embraced the challenge of raising children.

endurance challenges, including mud runs, obstacle races, triathlons, marathons, long-distance relays and all manner of other adventure challenges.⁴

As Leon Podles' suggests, "Three masculine modes of living which can be studied to develop the practices and approaches that the Church needs are initiation, the struggle and brotherly love."⁵ F3 provides these three modes by initiating men into an all male-community, producing intentional struggles, and providing avenues for brotherly love to emerge.

Therefore, will these men demonstrate a higher association with the traits of Biblical Masculinity compared to the average man? Having had their masculinity confirmed, are these men also more likely to engage with feminized environments than non-F3 men?

If confirmed, this would suggest that for ministry, especially within the egalitarian church, encouraging men to embrace challenges tends to increase their tendency to demonstrate Biblical Masculinity, while at the same time decreasing their tendency towards avoidance, isolation, and neglect of the responsibility God has placed upon them.

Using the scores for the three male archetypes provides insights about men who take on intentional challenges as opposed to men who have crucibles befall them.

Impact of Crucibles

"Intentional Crucibles" is a term used to describe the pursuits of men who have competed in endurance races, pursued career changes, experienced the birth of a child, or gone through similar crucibles that were self-initiated.

Another aspect of an intentional crucible is that it is a liminal event, which allows the participant to know that the challenge is temporary: "Intrinsic to enjoying liminality is an

⁴ "About F3," *F3*, Accessed October 18, 2016. <http://f3nation.com/about-us/>

⁵ Leon Podles, *The Impotent Church*, 197.

expectation of closure, and the sooner the better.”⁶ Unintended crucibles such as illness, depression, apathy, or job-loss tend to befall men without the guarantee of closure. Therefore, while the finitude of a challenge may not be experienced in the moment, the certainty of its temporariness provides the necessary sense of hope for men to be changed by these intentional crucibles. Without hope a man cannot survive, as Viktor Frankl stated: “The sudden loss of hope and courage can have a deadly effect.”⁷ Intentional crucibles help produce hope and courage and lead to transformation.

Most notable within this survey’s results is that men who seek out intentional crucibles—whether positive or negative—have a higher conformity to the Biblical Masculinity archetype and fewer Adamic tendencies compared to those who wait for crucible events to happen to them.

One man who hiked Mt. Rainier and had a near-death experience while on the mountain noticed the positive influence this intentional challenge had when he faced other unintentional challenges, like a family member’s illness:

The combination of training for Mt. Rainier and participating in F3 was a great motivator for me last year. It allowed me to tackle difficult challenges both professionally and personally because I had developed a very strong willpower. Furthermore, my fitness level was at its highest level which always provided an extra burst of energy for me. At times, I am also able to fall back on the experience and tell myself that if I can survive my ordeal in Rainier, I can overcome anything.

His crucible began through an email from a friend in F3 who was challenging seven men to go on “a major trip that would require commitment and training...something cool but not too

⁶ Mark Pierson, *The Art of Curating Worship: Reshaping the Role of Worship Leader* (Minneapolis, MN: Sparkhouse Press, 2010), 115.

⁷ Viktor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006), 75.

dangerous.”⁸ On the mountain, a rockfall snapped his rope and almost sent him careening over the edge. Surviving this challenge, however, afforded him an experience from which to draw confidence when faced with other challenges. Also, his higher physical capability provided the resilience and energy necessary to withstand the stress of other unintentional crucibles. Finally, he bonded with seven other men through their rigorous training and dramatic experience. As he shared before a men’s group, “I am frequently asked, ‘Would you do it again?’ I would not do it again but what I miss the most was the friendships formed within our team while we trained, researched, texted and encouraged each other.” This increased emotional resiliency, and strengthened male community all resulted because he embraced a challenge.

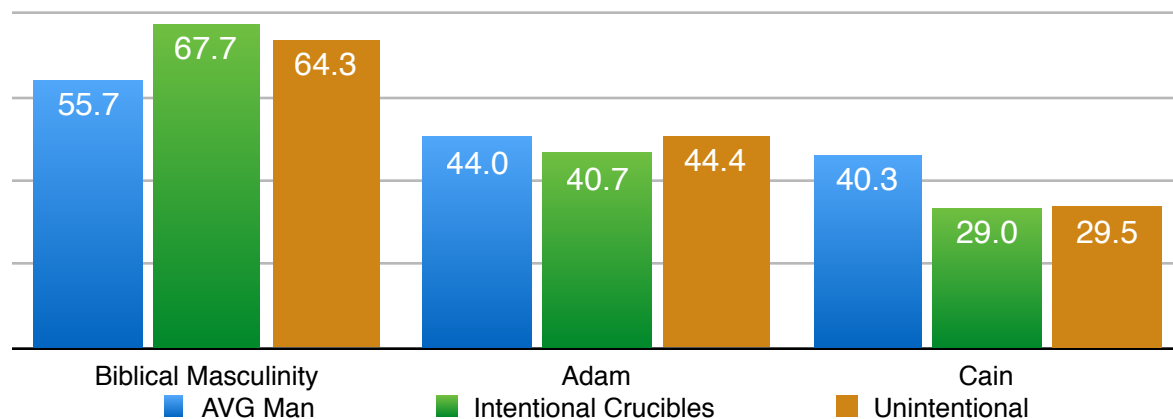
Through their Adamic tendencies, many men avoid challenges that would build a similar physical, emotional and relational resiliency. This makes them underprepared when the unavoidable and inevitable crucibles befall them. A statistical analysis of the correlation between a crucible’s intentionality and Biblical archetypes confirms that men who do not embrace intentional struggles are more passive and avoidant.

Influence of Intentional Crucibles on Biblical Archetypes

The following chart (Chart 1) compares the scores of men who have embraced intentional crucibles with those of both average men and men whose crucibles were unintentional.

⁸ Rick Rothacker, “Rockfall on Rainer: Adventure and Peril for Seven Charlotte Climbers,” *Charlotte Observer*, October 24, 2015, sec. Living Section.

Chart 1. Biblical Archetype Scores Based Upon Crucible Intentionality



- Intentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=67.7$) outsourced Unintentional ($\bar{x}=64.3$) on Biblical Masculinity ($t\text{-stat}=-1.92$; $p<0.05$).
- Intentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=40.69$) outsourced Unintentional ($\bar{x}=44.4$) on Adam ($t\text{-stat}=2.47$; $p<0.02$).

There are statistically significant differences between Biblical Masculinity and Adamic characteristics in men who intentionally take on challenges. This is not only when compared to the average male score within the *AMPM*, but also when compared to male participants who have not intentionally sought a crucible challenge within the past two years.

Interestingly, there is a higher differential in a man's Adam score, depending upon the intentionality of his crucibles. This suggests that men who seek out challenges are less likely to be passive and avoidant. By embracing challenges, these men undergo archetypal transformations based upon their intentionality.

Similarly, men who intentionally pursue challenges demonstrate a higher tendency towards the Biblical Masculinity archetype compared with both average men and the men who encounter crucibles unintentionally.

The men who intentionally pursue challenges also demonstrate a decrease in their Cainite traits when compared to the average man. However, they do not demonstrate a statistically significant variation from the rest of the research sample. Therefore, intentionally challenging

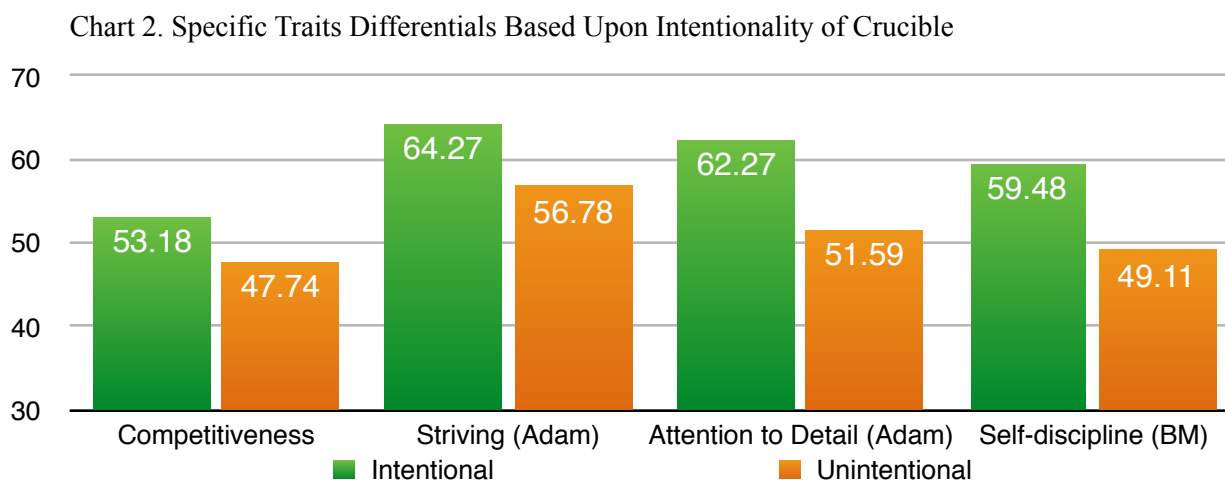
oneself is likely to alter one's passivity, but it does not seem to have statistical impact on one's aggressive egoism (Cain).

Men who have sought crucible events, rather than merely accepting unintentional challenges, are thus more likely to display the characteristics of Biblical Masculinity, while significantly reducing their Adamic tendencies. These men are more oriented towards servanthood and are less passive. These statistics suggest that men who seek out challenges are less avoidant, negligent and isolated. The data is inconclusive regarding the impact on their hyper-masculinity, aggression and divisiveness, however.

Influence of Intentional Crucibles on Specific Traits

Having seen the influence of crucibles on the Biblical archetypes by looking at the specific personality traits from the *AMPM* scores, variable comparisons begin to emerge along with these archetypal shifts. By focusing on some specific traits, smaller noteworthy trends also appear.

Men who took on intentional challenges within the past two years scored higher in the areas of competitiveness, striving, attention to detail and self-discipline, compared to men who did not take on an intentional challenge:



- Intentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=53.18$) outscored Unintentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=47.74$) on Competitiveness ($t\text{-stat}=-1.96$; $p<0.05$).
- Intentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=64.27$) outscored Unintentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=56.78$) on Striving ($t\text{-stat}=-2.33$; $p<0.05$).
- Intentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=62.27$) outscored Unintentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=51.59$) on Attention to Detail ($t\text{-stat}=-3.01$; $p<0.005$).
- Intentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=59.48$) outscored Unintentional Crucibles ($\bar{x}=49.11$) on Self-Discipline ($t\text{-stat}=-2.54$; $p<0.02$).

Whether the crucible is intentional or not creates a differentiation. Men who seek to intentionally challenge themselves are more competitive, seek to make improvements, have greater attention to detail, and have more discipline in their lives compared to men whose crucibles have simply befallen them.

Crucible Analysis

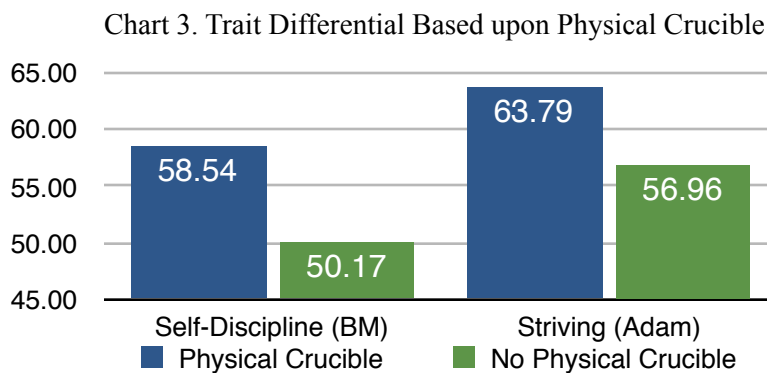
Noting that in general intentional challenges produce change in a man's life, a similar analysis comparing particular traits and their association with different styles of crucible event, reveals some notable correlations emerge.

Physical crucibles are the only ones that have a positive correlation with a particular desirable trait, namely self-discipline (Biblical Masculinity). However, emotional, relational and vocational crucibles have a negative correlation with particular traits. These final three types of crucibles produce men who are less trusting, less dependable, less assertive, and more emotionally reactive with less control over their anger. Spiritual crucibles show no statistical correlation with any particular trait. However, thirty-one men identified spiritual "apathy" as an issue they have struggled against within the past two years.

While crucibles influence the whole man, the participants were encouraged in the survey to view their challenge through a particular lens. However, most acknowledged that they had been challenged within multiple arenas (mode=3) over the past two years.

Physical Crucibles:

People who view themselves as having struggled physically score higher on their striving and marginally higher on self-discipline.



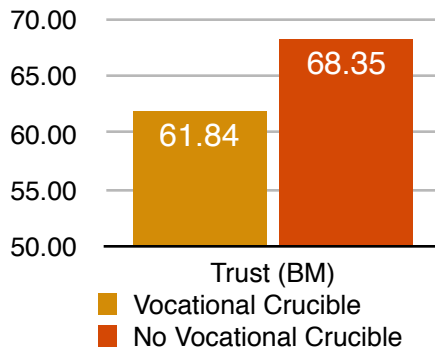
- Men who have struggled physically ($\bar{x}=58.54$) scored higher than those without physical crucible events ($\bar{x}=50.17$) on self-discipline ($t\text{-stat}=-2.16$; $p<0.06$).
- Men who have struggled physically ($\bar{x}=63.79$) scored higher than those without physical crucible events ($\bar{x}=56.96$) on striving ($t\text{-stat}=-1.95$; $p<0.05$).

There is thus a statistical correlation between those who have encountered physical crucibles such as athletic competitions, cancer, or major illnesses, and being more striving and possibly more self-disciplined, compared with those who have not experienced a physical crucible.

Vocational Crucibles:

People who view themselves as having struggled professionally have lower trust scores, which decreases their Biblical Masculinity tendencies.

Chart 4. Trait Differential Based upon Vocational Crucible



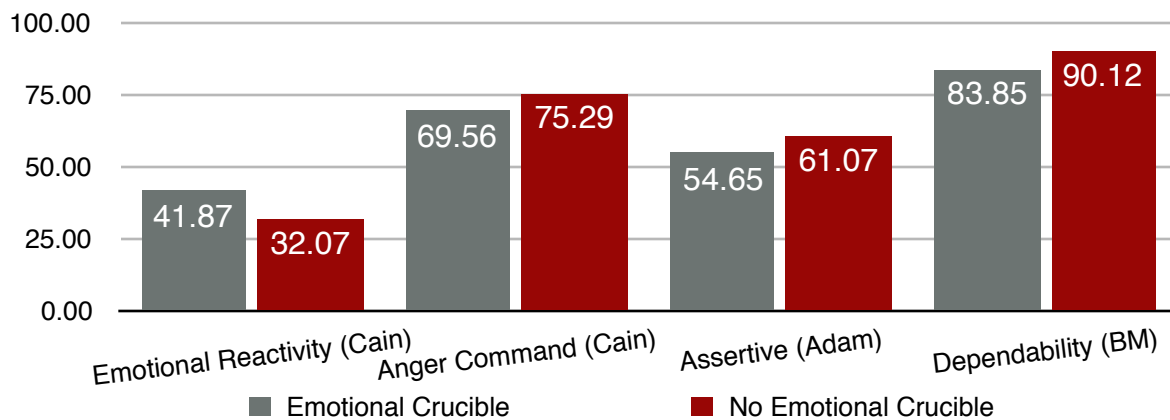
•Men who have struggled professionally (\bar{x} =61.84) scored lower than those without vocational crucible events (\bar{x} =68.35) on trust (t-stat=3.19; $p<0.002$).

This suggests a correlation between professional challenges, such as career changes, financial pressures, unemployment, or lack of vocational direction with a man's trust of others.

Emotional Crucibles:

People who view themselves as having struggled emotionally are more emotionally reactive (Cain), have less command over their anger (Cain), are less assertive (Adam), less dependable (Biblical Masculinity).

Chart 5. Trait Differential Based upon Emotional Crucible

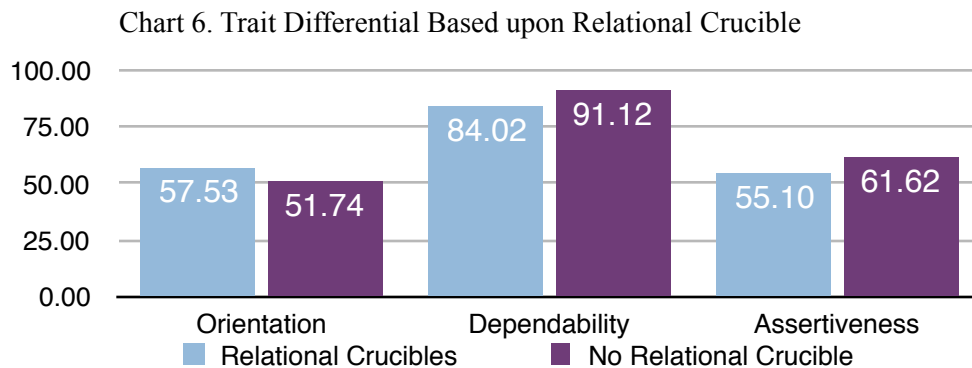


- Men who have struggled emotionally (\bar{x} =41.87) scored lower than those without emotional crucible events (\bar{x} =32.07) on emotional reactivity (t-stat=-3.99; $p<0.000$).
- Men who have struggled emotionally (\bar{x} =69.56) scored lower than those without emotional crucible events (\bar{x} =75.29) on anger command (t-stat=2.03; $p<0.045$).
- Men who have struggled emotionally (\bar{x} =54.65) scored lower than those without emotional crucible events (\bar{x} =61.07) on assertiveness (t-stat=2.09; $p<0.04$).
- Men who have struggled emotionally (\bar{x} =83.85) scored lower than those without emotional crucible events (\bar{x} =90.12) on dependability (t-stat=2.64; $p<0.01$).

This suggests that men who have been challenged emotionally through crucibles such as addiction, anxiety, depression and the illnesses of loved ones, reflect negative traits such as greater emotional reactivity, lower command on their anger, are less assertive and less dependable than those who have not experienced emotional crucibles.

Relational Crucibles:

Similar to emotional challenges, men who have experienced relational challenges such as divorce, separation, marital discord and parenting struggles are oriented towards others, but are less dependable and less assertive. Of the sixty-eight men who identified relational struggles, thirty-eight of them acknowledged the issues surrounding parenting their children.



- Men who have struggled relationally ($\bar{x}=57.53$) scored higher than those without relational crucible events ($\bar{x}=51.74$) on orientation ($t\text{-stat}=-2.03$; $p<0.05$).
- Men who have struggled relationally ($\bar{x}=84.02$) scored lower than those without relational crucible events ($\bar{x}=91.12$) on dependability. ($t\text{-stat}=2.92$; $p<0.004$).
- Men who have struggled relationally ($\bar{x}=55.10$) scored lower than those without relational crucible events ($\bar{x}=61.62$) on assertiveness. ($t\text{-stat}=2.05$; $p<0.04$).

This suggests that people who view themselves as having experienced relational crucibles are less dependable and assertive. They are more willing to turn to others when crisis emerge, however.

Analysis

By focusing on the correlation between these specific types of crucible events and personality traits, some associations can be identified. Men who feel they have faced emotional crucibles tend to be more emotionally reactive, have less command over their anger, and are less assertive and dependable. Likewise, relational crucibles are associated with lower dependability and assertiveness scores. While men who feel they have struggled relationally are more outward-oriented—which is a positive trait in their Biblical Masculinity score—there could be a negative influence. It may suggest that they are often disappointed in their relationships, because they want to rely on others, but have experienced relational conflict as a result.

Finally, vocational crucibles, where the most participants felt challenged within the past two years (81%), also erode relational connections, as those men appear to be less trusting of others. This means men who are challenged professionally are less trustworthy, which results in isolation, thereby losing a vital place for their masculine identity to be confirmed: “notions of work are central to masculine identities and are major sites for construction and reconstruction.”⁹

Men who feel they have experienced emotional, relational and vocational crucibles are therefore less connected, assertive and more isolated. In a later section, the results show a positive correlation between a man’s involvement in male community and these traits of orientation, assertiveness and anger command. These crucible results therefore suggest that men would benefit by developing a connected male community prior to experiencing emotional, relational and vocational crucibles.

⁹ Ruth Simpson, “Masculinity at Work: The Experiences of Men in Female Dominated Occupations,” *Work, Employment and Society* 18 (June): 351.

With regard to specific crucibles, it is only the physical ones that have a correlation with positive traits. This confirms the previous research's analysis on the positive benefits of physical activity. While not statistically significant, there appears also to be a marginal correlation with lower aggressiveness and greater Biblical Masculinity scores. A larger research pool would be necessary to verify this minor trend. These results therefore suggest that men should intentionally challenge themselves physically in order to build the confidence necessary to withstand not only unexpected challenges but also relational, emotional and vocational crucibles.

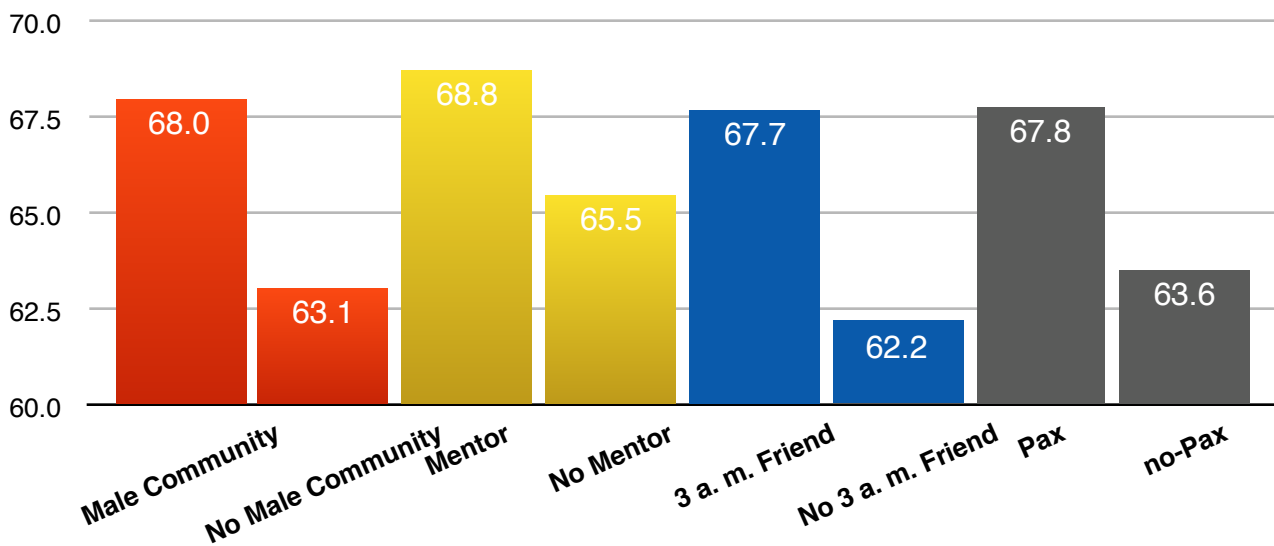
The comparison between different crucibles suggests a particular sensitivity and awareness that not all crucibles create positive change. As these men become more committed and invested in the lives of other men, they become aware of the detrimental impact that emotional, relational and vocational crucibles can have upon a man. This is important because it means that by intentionally challenging men physically, within a spiritually-based, emotionally-resilient male community can help a man weather the detrimental impact of the other unintentional crucibles in his life.

Impact of Male Community

As noted, relational, emotional and vocational crucibles tend to isolate men, increasing their passivity and decreasing their trust and dependability. In fact, the only crucibles that had a positive association were physical crucibles. Therefore, relational, emotional and vocational crucibles cause men to struggle in isolation. After looking at the negative impact of these specific crucibles, the importance of male community in stabilizing a man's life becomes apparent. Having a robust male community, which encourages assertiveness and commitment, can help to mitigate the negative effects of these crucibles.

When participants were asked what type of male community they had while undergoing their crucible event, a correlation emerged between their Biblical Masculinity score and their overall male community score. The more robust their male community, the higher their Biblical Masculinity score. Also, they scored higher in the Biblical Masculinity archetype if they had a mentor, a 3 a. m. friend, or a small group of other males.¹⁰ Only the mentee relationship showed no statistical significance with Biblical Masculinity scores.

Chart 9. Comparing Biblical Masculinity Scores and Male Community



- Men with Male Community (\bar{x} =68.0) outscored those without No Male Community (\bar{x} =63.1) on Biblical Masculinity (t-stat=-2.67; $p<0.01$).
- Men with Mentors (\bar{x} =68.8) outscored those without Mentors (\bar{x} =65.5) on Biblical Masculinity (t-stat=-1.93; $p<0.05$).
- Men with 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =67.7) outscored those without 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =62.2) on Biblical Masculinity (t-stat=-2.67; $p<0.01$).
- Men with Male Small Groups (\bar{x} =67.8) outscored those without Male Small Groups (\bar{x} =63.6) on Biblical Masculinity (t-stat=-2.24; $p<0.03$).

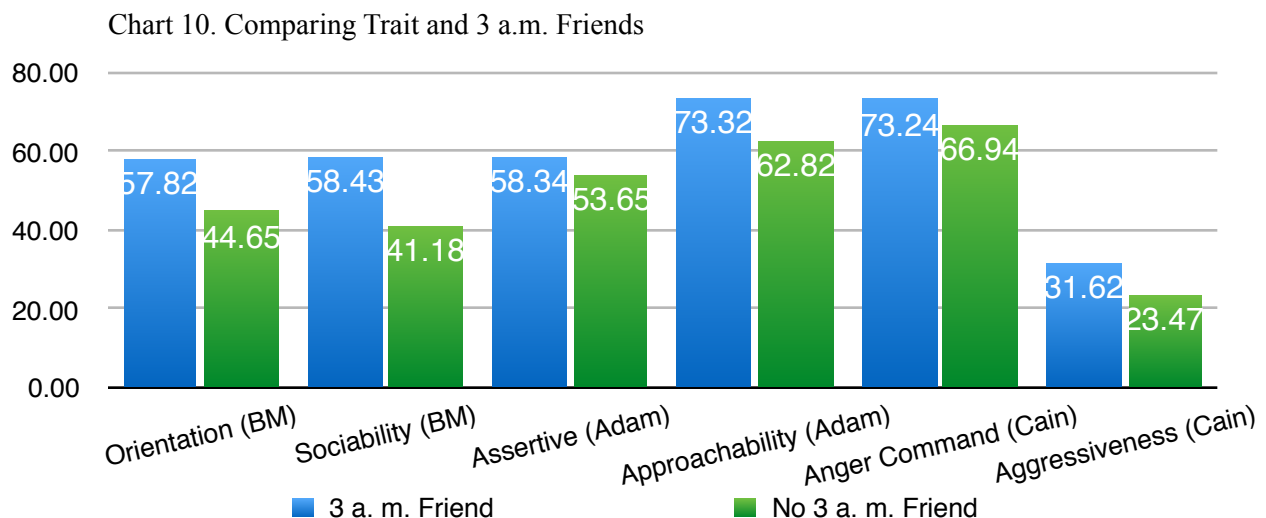
This result is significant because it highlights the value of male community. This suggests that men who surround themselves with like-minded men have a higher rate of dependability,

¹⁰ The chart below uses the F3 term “pax” for male small groups.

trust, orientation, self-discipline, sociability and kindness, than men who do not have these relationships in their life. This confirms the previous research's recognition that male-community, father-figures and brotherly-friendships are vital to a man.

3 a. m. Friends

The 3 a. m. friend in particular appears to have the greatest effect in countering the negative impact of unintentional crucibles. Men who have at least one man they can rely on during critical crucible events demonstrate higher rates of anger command, assertiveness, sociability, approachability and orientation, than men who have nobody to fill that role. While they also are more aggressive, this may be balanced out with their orientation and approachability scores.



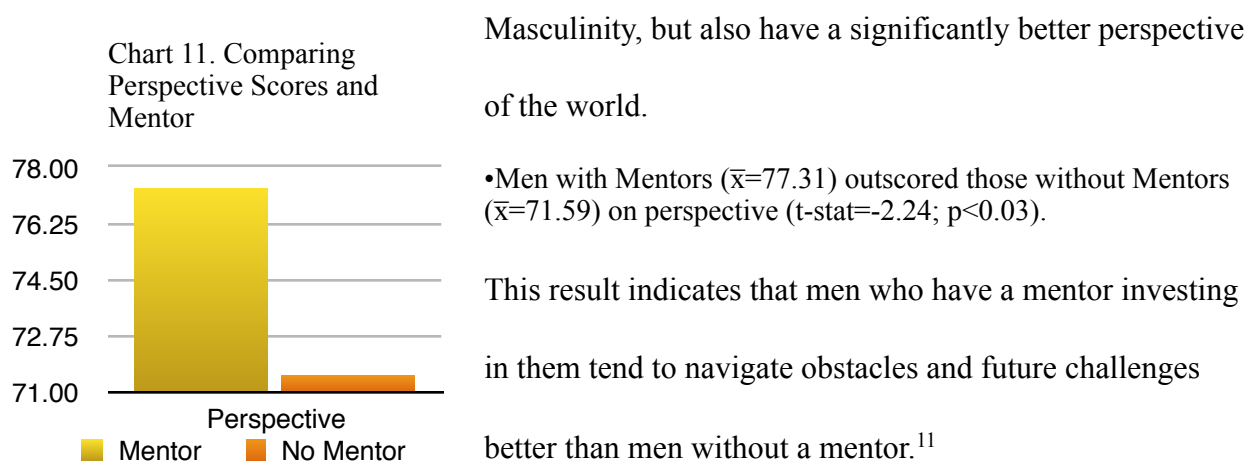
- Men with 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =57.82) outscored those without 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =44.65) on Orientation (t-stat=-4.35; p <0.000)
- Men with 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =58.43) outscored those without 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =41.18) on Sociability (t-stat=-6.37; p <0.000)
- Men with 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =58.34) outscored those without 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =53.65) on Assertiveness (t-stat=-2.00; p <0.05).
- Men with 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =73.32) outscored those without 3 a. m. Friends (\bar{x} =62.82) on Approachability (t-stat=-4.52; p <0.00001).

- Men with 3 a. m. Friends ($\bar{x}=73.24$) outscored those without 3 a. m. Friends ($\bar{x}=66.94$) on Anger Command ($t\text{-stat}=-2.35$; $p<0.02$).
- Men with 3 a. m. Friends ($\bar{x}=31.62$) outscored those without 3 a. m. Friends ($\bar{x}=23.47$) on Aggressiveness ($t\text{-stat}=-3.47$; $p<0.001$).

These results indicate that relationships with a peer correlate with a man who has higher control over his anger, is less passive, and is more oriented towards others. Having this form of reliable male friendship tempers Cainite tendencies, while decreasing Adamic avoidance.

Mentors

Similarly, having a mentor and not only peers improves a man's life. Men who have intentionally placed mentors in their lives, not only demonstrate higher traits of Biblical



Impact of F3

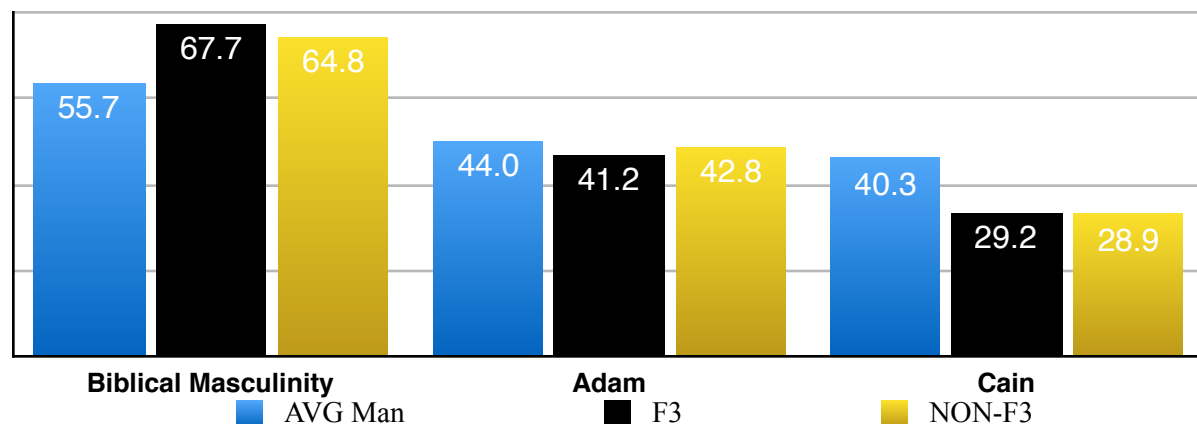
Since a central aspect of F3 is to encourage men to embrace physical challenges (First F) and to forge male-friendships and mentorships (Second F), F3 men tend to experience the same positive effects described above. However, the Third F means that the men of F3 reorient

¹¹ "Perspective: Ability to see people and the world from different perspectives. High scorers are broad-minded, and are able to see the 'big picture.' They are able to view the world through other people's eyes. Low scorers have a narrower perspective, unable to 'see the forest for the trees.' They have difficulty understanding other people's point of view and the 'big picture'." *Operational Definitions*, 3.

themselves to lead within their community. The belief is that “fit and friended men turn outward.”¹²

Therefore, the overall impact of F3 in a man’s life goes beyond physical improvements. Not only does F3 provide a workout similar to other fitness groups, but also due its focus on developing male leadership, it is able to amplify the positive effects of intentional physical crucibles into other arenas of life. F3 funnels the strides a man makes physically into a greater holistic transformation of his body, mind and spirit for servant leadership to the larger community.

Chart 7. Comparing Biblical Archetype and F3 Involvement



F3 and Non-F3 participants demonstrated a higher tendency towards the Biblical Masculinity archetype compared to the average man. F3 men showed a marginal statistical difference from the non-F3 men in terms of their display of Biblical Masculinity characteristics.

F3 and Non-F3 participants demonstrated a lower tendency towards the Adamic archetype than the average man. F3 men showed no statistical difference from non-F3 men with regard to Adamic characteristics.

¹² Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 109.

F3 and Non-F3 participants demonstrated a lower tendency towards the Cainite archetype than the average man. F3 men showed no difference from the non-F3 men with regard to Cainite characteristics, however.

Therefore men who have been involved in F3 are more likely to display Biblical Masculinity characteristics and have lower Adamic and Cainite tendencies compared to the average man. There is less passivity and hyper-masculinity among these men and a greater desire to be obedient, servant-oriented and committed.

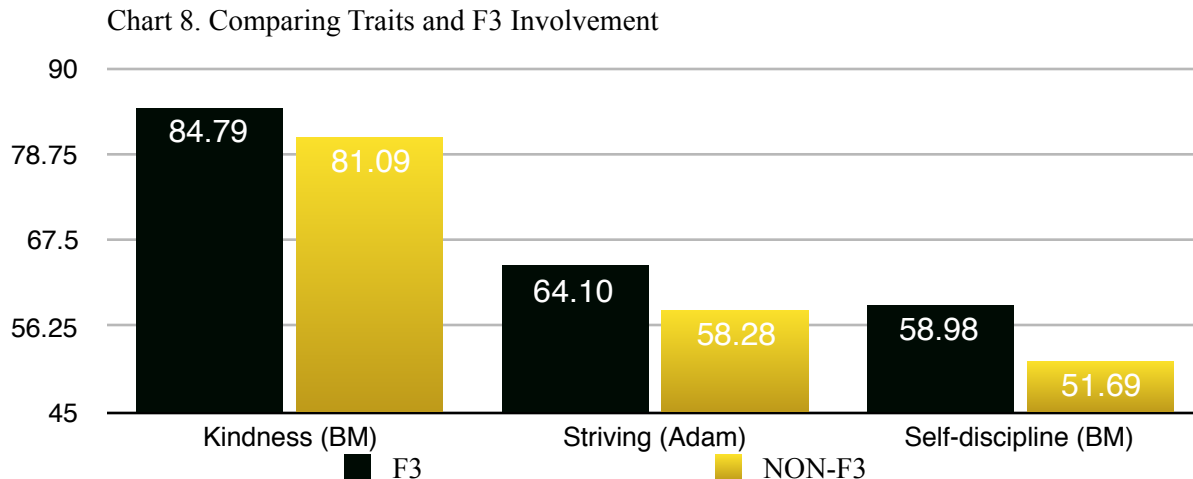
While there is no statistical difference between the F3 and non-F3 populations within the survey population with regard to archetypal differences, the men of F3 do demonstrate a significant difference when compared to the average population. The prior section identified statistical differences resided between the intentional versus unintentional crucibles. Those statistics suggest that a man's transformation from a passive Adamic archetype into an embodiment of Biblical Masculinity is not unique to F3, but that it is the intentionality of embracing physical crucibles, which is a portion of F3's mission, that catalyzes the transformation of a man's Biblical archetype.

The statistical analysis confirms the goal of the first F (Fitness), which is to attract men through physical challenges by showing a correlation between a man's embracing of intentional crucibles and the Biblical Masculine archetype. Later quantitative analysis will show the importance of the second F (Fellowship), which helps intensify and sustain this transformation.

Influence of F3 on Specific Traits

Beyond the archetypal impact there appears to be a statistical correlation between F3 participation and kindness that is not noticeable in men who merely embrace intentional

challenges. Kindness is the only personality trait that produces a significant statistical difference



between F3 and non-F3 men. Within the *AMPM* psychometric scoring, the kindness trait is the only one where women outscored men:

- Women ($\bar{x}=74.7$) outscored men ($\bar{x}=68.0$) on Kindness ($t\text{-stat}=5.211$; $p<0.001$).

This suggests that F3 men are willing to display a feminine trait, namely kindness. While men who take on intentional challenges are more disciplined, achievement oriented, and competitive than the average man, there is something unique about the F3 environment that attracts kind men:

- F3 ($\bar{x}=84.79$) outscored nonF3 ($\bar{x}=81.09$) on Kindness ($t\text{-stat}=-2.04$; $p<0.04$).

Furthermore, there was marginal variation in striving and self-discipline scores. F3 participants scored only marginally higher to non-F3 participants in those categories:

- F3 ($\bar{x}=64.10$) outscored nonF3 ($\bar{x}=58.28$) on Striving ($t\text{-stat}=-1.84$; $p<0.07$).
- F3 ($\bar{x}=58.98$) outscored nonF3 ($\bar{x}=51.69$) on Self-Discipline ($t\text{-stat}=-1.82$; $p<0.07$).

When comparing the intentional crucible population to the F3 population, the fact that both the striving and self-discipline traits are statistically more pronounced in the intentional crucible population suggests a higher correlation between physical challenges and striving and

self-discipline. It is the physical activity that produces striving and self-discipline. By highlighting the statistical correlation with kindness, however, this research notes a unique aspect of men within F3: they have a greater willingness to help others.

F3 men will often comment that they could receive a better workout with a personal trainer in a gym, but prefer F3 because of the community it develops; the willingness to be there for others is what keeps them connected. As the previous research indicated, a major part of F3 is being aware of all men and adapting to meet their needs. Therefore, a phrase emerged within in F3 is to “watch the 6.” “The 6” is the term for a man who has fallen to the back of a workout and is struggling to keep up. By being attuned to all the men in attendance, the men of F3 are showing specific concern for the well-being of others: “For a workout to be successful, the [leader] has to challenge both the fast guys and slow guys without driving off the new guys.”¹³ This is the kindness trait being demonstrated.

This statistical correlation suggests F3 is effectively attracting kind men. Also since this is perceived to be a feminine trait, it shows that men are reintegrating towards the feminine. This reengagement with the feminine, suggests that F3 is able to confirm a man’s masculine identity.

This finding corresponds with Cheryan’s research:

When not under threat, men did not differ in their preferences for feminine and masculine products. This suggests that the feminine products were no more stigmatized or less attractive for men than the masculine products when men were not under threat. However, when faced with masculine identity threat, threatened men showed less interest in feminine products than in masculine products.¹⁴

¹³ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 76.

¹⁴ Sapna Cheryan et al., “Manning Up: Threatened Men Compensate by Disavowing Feminine Preferences and Embracing Masculine Attributes,” *Social Psychology* 46, no. 4 (August 2015): 225.

Since men tend to avoid not only feminized products but also the feminized spheres out of fear of being emasculated, this suggests that the F3 environment provides a male community that successfully confirms a man's masculinity. This confidence is robust enough to encourage the men to step into feminized environments in order to lead more effectively without feeling threatened in their masculinity thereby completing the third stage of the hero's quest.

Engagement in Feminized Spheres

The men who have committed to F3 typically want to improve their engagement in the home, the office, the church, and the community. They are willing to be reintegrated with the feminine because their masculinity is no longer threatened. These "fit" and "friended" men also show a greater desire to improve their engagement with the wider communities.

In the Likert scale survey, the men were given six areas of life and asked to gauge their current involvement therein. They were then asked what their future plans in those areas might be. The six spheres were marriage, parenting, church, community, work and exercise. F3 men generally want to improve themselves, with 82% wanting to make overall improvements in all six areas.

However, when three of those spheres are identified as predominantly feminized spheres

(parenting, church and community-causes), a noticeable difference emerges. More F3 men (74%) plan to engage with the feminized spheres than non-F3 men (59%). Within that same population there is no noticeable difference in the degree of feminine engagement based upon their involvement in physical challenges (69% to 72%). Since

Table 12. Percentage of Responders Planning to Reintegrate with the Feminine Environments

Plan to engage feminized areas	
F3	NonF3
74%	59%
Physical Crucible	No Physical Crucible
69%	72%

the differentiation is observable between the F3 and non-F3 participants—but not within the physical versus non-physical crucibles—the data suggests that it is not the physical nature of the F3 workouts that produces a greater desire for increased involvement in feminized environments such as the home or church. Instead, the increased desire resides in some other aspect of the F3 community that no longer threatens their masculinity.

Therefore, this data suggests that when men are challenged physically in a male community such as F3, they are provided with an avenue through which their precarious masculine identity is tested and confirmed. Further, having their masculinity tested through a physical ordeal and confirmed in a male community, these men are prepared to increase their engagement in feminized spheres, such as the egalitarian church.

Qualitative Analysis of F3's Influence

While the quantitative data shows the correlation of intentional crucibles with higher Biblical Masculinity and lower Adamic scores and that F3 participation correlates with the kindness trait, the qualitative analysis highlights the sustained impact of the bonds formed by F3. Out of narratives gathered from the men, a synergy begins to appear between the quantitative and qualitative data, in relation to the impact F3 has had on Biblical archetypes.

Taking the words of participants and connecting them to the particular archetypal characteristics, the intention behind F3's strategy begins to take shape, implying not only a statistical correlation, but also anecdotal causation: intentional crucibles catalyze change, but communal bonds sustain the change.¹⁵

¹⁵ Full responses are attached as Appendix D.

A man belongs to the F3 community simply because he participates. Participation bonds the men to the community. This essential quality of F3 helps to develop an environment in which men have to continually demonstrate their commitment, obedience and servanthood, rather than enable their passive, negligent and isolationist tendencies.

As with masculinity, F3 involvement is precarious and requires constant demonstration. Thus, although it is the physical crucible that was statistically associated with a shift from Adamic passivity to Biblical Masculinity, it is the continual involvement with others that renews it. This renewal affords men opportunities to combat a precarious masculinity and build their confidence.

When a man arrives at a workout, he is not aware of the challenges that loom. Instead he places his trust in the leader, who is also a peer, not a professional. As the leader takes him through different regimens, the man is encouraged to “work his workout.” While he can stop or alter any exercise, doing repetitions alongside other men often encourages a man to push himself. Over time that man will typically choose to lead a workout. When he steps up to lead, he suddenly experiences the affirmation of twenty men responding and obeying his commands. This causes him to consider that if these men will listen to his leadership, what might happen if he stepped up in his home or in the broader community? The man’s confidence has been built in response to Bosson and Vandello’s three basic tenets of precarious manhood because it has been earned through public and repetitive demonstration.

Conversely, the precariousness of this new form of masculinity can be discerned in men who can no longer participate in F3; it is easily lost. A man who had been injured and was unable to participate noted that, “the absence of [F3] has negatively impacted almost every aspect of my

life. Being injured and not being able to participate in F3 has had the complete opposite impact.” Loss of the positive impact of being physically challenged resulted not only in decreased physical health, but also his “emotional health has been far worse by not being able to be a part of F3.” In contrast, one seventy year-old man, who recently had a knee replacement, said he still attends F3 workouts for the opening gathering and the closing “circle of trust.” However, while the other men go through their workout, he chooses to walk his dog. This man wants to stay connected to F3 despite physical limitations. He knows participation produces a sense of belonging. The bond that is formed among the men of F3 requires regular participation, which counters the precarious nature of masculinity and keeps men from experiencing the detrimental effects of non-participation.

F3’s Influence on Biblical Masculinity

As has been already presented, the Biblical Masculinity archetype is demonstrated in a man who shows *obedience*, *servanthood*, and *commitment* to others. These are men who are reliable, other-oriented and devoted. The bonds formed by men during F3 help to promote the characteristics of Biblical Masculinity.

Increasing the Effects of Obedience:

Table 13. Participant Responses about Dependability and Trustworthiness

P12	“I feel like I am more dependable.”
P5	“I am a better husband, father, son and friend because the men of F3 hold me accountable whether they know it or not because I don't want to let them down.”

Dependability: Often men initially participate in F3 through the invitation of a neighbor or co-worker. These personal invitations make men more accountable to other men.

There is an expectation that a man will arrive at a workout when invited by a friend or co-worker. He is then led through a series of different workouts following the commands of a stranger. By participating, he is learning to trust another man.

As the dependability of participation increases, often these men will themselves take charge of a particular workout location. This means they will be responsible for recruiting workout leaders and initiating newcomers. If a man goes missing from a workout, the group will often reach out to him. This is an extension of the “watch the 6,” where men begin to notice who is *not* there.

Similarly, their dependability expands beyond the physical workout as they assume responsibility within the broader local community by organizing tutoring efforts, collecting items for the homeless, leading workouts at the men’s shelter or other charitable acts. These challenge men to rely upon each other for causes greater than themselves.

Trust: As their dependability increases, so does the trustfulness of participants. As they struggle together physically, they begin to rely on other men. Some of the exercises, and especially the events, require partners. This need to work with partners helps men realize they can only complete the challenge if they trust other men with their physical well-being. They become partners in the mission.

Furthermore, each workout closes with a “circle of trust,” which symbolizes the trust the men have placed in each other throughout the workouts. One man noticed the transfer of trust among the F3 participants because “the men of F3 hold [him] accountable” and he does not want to let them down. Finding themselves more dependable and trustworthy, these men are able to discover the positive values of being obedient.

Increasing the Effects of Servanthood:

Table 14. Participant Responses about Orientation and Kindness

P11	“[F3] has given me a place to share what I do and at times help others.”
P6	“[F3] has helped me think more about how I treat people.”

Having experienced the positive impact of F3 within their own lives, such men desire to see others rise up and make their own personal improvements. One interviewee said that participating in F3 has increased his “confidence in knowing that there are more guys in the same life stage and spiritual development as myself,” while another expressed that it “opened my eyes to a lot of folks I did not know in our community.” This social connectivity helps these men reorient away from themselves to help others: “Fit and friended men turn outward.”¹⁶

Orientation: Their attention is now being turned outward. While men often arrive at their first workout with their minds focused on their own wellbeing, as their stamina increases they are able to watch over other men. During workouts, the men are encouraged to watch each other to see who may be struggling or falling behind. Rather than pushing forward, they are then encouraged to drop back and adjust.

Kindness: Their kindness, which is defined as a “willingness and desire to help others,”¹⁷ was highlighted during a training session for new leaders. The leaders were told to show compassion and consideration for the other men: “For some men this may be the best moment of their day. You do not know what is going on in their head; they may have just come from a fight with their wife, or left a screaming toddler or heading to a job that they hate, so make sure you

¹⁶ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 109.

¹⁷ “Kindness,” *Operational Definitions* (PsychTests AIM Inc., 2014), 4

make this moment for them.”¹⁸ By being aware of and concerned for the other, a bond begins to emerge as men work shoulder-to-shoulder: “[men] need to go through something together... [because they] tend to make their deepest friends through periods of intense engagement.”¹⁹

Increasing the Effects of Commitment:

Table 15. Participant Responses about Sociability and Discipline

P12	“[I] now have a Bible study I participate in, as well as a band of brothers I can discuss issues with.”
P2	“Knowing that I can achieve things physically that I never thought I could do, like run on a 200 mile relay team over 29 hours, helps me understand that when I encounter other obstacles in life that I can work through those as well.”

Turning their attention outward, a sense of commitment is encouraged within the F3 because of these bonds formed between the men.

Sociability: When a man attends his first workout, he is given a nickname at the end of the workout that confers a sense of belonging simply by participation. This is the initiation ritual for a new man giving him an identity within the community. Once part of the community, the men of F3 “tend to seek out the company”²⁰ of other F3 men.

This sociability is also noticeable in the language of F3, where men begin to reference other men as “brothers.” Over time, the level of commitment to other men deepens beyond the 45 minute workout. Groups of men have social gatherings and Bible studies after workouts. As one man stated, they discover, “it is not just about having my needs met,” but about others.

¹⁸ David Dixon, “Q-School Training” (presented at the F3 Winston-Salem, Winston-Salem, NC, April 23, 2016).

¹⁹ Billy Baker, “The Biggest Threat Facing Middle-Age Men Isn’t Smoking or Obesity. It’s Loneliness,” *Boston Globe*, last modified March 9, 2017, accessed March 13, 2017, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2017/03/09/the-biggest-threat-facing-middle-age-men-isn-smoking-obesity-loneliness/k6saC9FnnHQCUBf5mJ8okL/story.html>.

²⁰ “Sociability,” *Operational Definitions*, 3.

Self-Discipline: Due to the precarious nature of F3’s “membership”—a man belongs because he participates—routine participation is required. Men not only belong because they have begun to seek out the company of other F3 men, but also because they routinely return. To continue at a high level of commitment a man must therefore also become disciplined in his life.

Since most workouts begin at 5:30 a. m., F3 participants need a disciplined lifestyle to attend. Multiple men noted that they have had to reduce alcohol consumption, monitor their eating habits, and get to bed earlier in order to make it to and through the workouts. The physical challenges require a high level of commitment.

Having pushed themselves not only physically, but also relationally and emotionally, the men of F3 discover a deeper level of dependability, kindness and resilience, that increases their Biblical Masculinity archetype. As their obedience, servanthood and commitment increase, so too their tendency towards Adamic passivity decreases.

F3’s Influence on Adamic Passivity

As previously discussed, the Adamic archetype is evident in a man who avoids and neglects responsibility, thereby isolating himself from others. Such men are passive, careless, and solitary. The bonds formed by men in F3 decrease the influence of this archetype on a man.

Countering the Effects of Avoidance:

Table 16. Participant Responses on Assertiveness and Striving

P6	I have “increased self confidence which leads to resiliency.”
P1	“It has taught me how to manage pain and know how much harder I can push myself.”
P3	I am “more alert and active...”

Assertiveness: With a high expectation of participation, men are forced to reject

passivity.²¹ Avoidance is countered immediately through the active engagement and accountability F3 creates. For F3 to exist, it requires that men step up to lead, as two of the core principles state:

- Free of charge.
- Led by men who participate in the workout in a rotating fashion, with no training or certification necessary.²²

This means that participation within F3 is both inclusive and voluntary; without prerequisites or fees, there is nothing beyond self-motivation to connect a man to the group: “There is no other initiation required. There is no fee. F3 has no registration form. All a man has to do is [show up], make it through to the [end], and accept his F3 [nick]name.”²³ However, even if surviving the first workout seems daunting, a man is encouraged to “work his own workout.” This means that he can participate as his body and mind will allow.

When given a workout to complete, such as ten pushups, he has a choice. Either he can passively observe others complete the task, or, as happens most often, he can choose to participate in the full set. This will typically push him to do a little bit more than he would have thought possible.

Then, since all men are encouraged to lead workouts at some point, when a man is invited to lead twenty-five other men through an exercise regime, he discovers an underutilized sense of confidence and assertiveness. If he can have these men do pushups to his cadence, a level of confidence builds that translates into other arenas of life.

²¹ “Rejecting passivity” is Robert Lewis’s first principle in manhood. Robert Lewis, *Raising a Modern-Day Knight: A Father’s Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 51.

²² “About F3,” *F3nation*, n.d., accessed October 18, 2016, www.f3nation.com/about-us.

²³ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 16.

As one man described it: “Before F3, every time a boss asked me if I was interested in management, I always declined. I never thought it was something I had the talent to do. After F3, however, I realized I had a natural ability to lead.” Likewise, three other men stated that F3 has given them a greater self-confidence. Instead of avoiding crucibles like an Adam, these men are able to deal with others in a more “self-assured manner.”²⁴

Striving: As a peer-led organization, the F3 workouts develop male leadership as they work towards self-improvement. This provides an environment for them to manage pain and know how much harder they can push themselves. The same man who credited F3 with helping him discover his natural ability to lead, also stated that F3 provided the confidence to help him rise from a sales person to head up their national sales team. He would not have striven for the expanded responsibility had it not been for F3. As men discover their ability to push themselves through physical challenges, they begin to push themselves professionally, spiritually and relationally also.

Countering the Effects of Negligence:

Table 17. Participant Responses about Attention to Detail and Diligence

P1	“It has taught me...how important rest is to success and not being distracted by drinking, staying out late or eating poorly”
P2	“The mental preparation that goes with those events is just as important as the physical preparation.”

Attention to Detail: Since F3 challenges a man to strive and become assertive, men cannot be derelict in their responsibilities. F3 workouts start on time, therefore participation requires timeliness. A man who oversleeps is left behind. Also, a man is expected to tailor the workout to his own physical condition, so he has to be aware of how his body feels during the

²⁴ “Assertiveness,” *Operational Definitions*, 2.

different regimens. Counting in rhythm, producing split times and other metrics of performance provide detail about his physical output. This attention to detail in physicality produces a mental astuteness that translates over into other areas of a man's life.

Not only are men encouraged to focus on their physical improvements, but also leaders of workouts are expected to count how many men are at a workout, remember the names of the men who participated and publish on the website a recount of the day's workout. Regions keep track of numerical participation. This level of detail subtly encourages participation and competition between different groups.

When asked how his participation in F3 has impacted his job, one responder said he has noticed that his physical improvement has helped him professionally. He noted that it has caused him to become "fatigue resistant," not only physically, but also mentally. This in turn improves his attention to detail as his work requires mental "jousting." He finds a noticeable difference in his mental astuteness on days he works out and days he does not. Being attentive to detail thus forces men to become diligent in their behaviors.

Diligence: As noted earlier, failure to show up to F3 workouts begins to erode the confidence that has been built within a man. Therefore, F3 participants must show a "willingness to work hard and follow through."²⁵ This allows a man to discover that he could achieve things unimaginable before F3, such as running on a 200 mile relay team for over twenty-nine hours.

There is an expectation that if you propose a problem, you are expected to provide the necessary leadership to solve the issue. Another F3 participant recalled that when three guys suggested that they collect shoes for the Charlotte Rescue Mission their initial goal was 100 pairs

²⁵ "Diligence," *Operational Definitions*, 5.

of shoes. However, by the end of the venture, they had received 1300 pairs of shoes plus \$500 for underwear and socks. As one resident of the Rescue Mission stated, “F3 always goes big. We were hoping for enough shoes for this year, and we got shoes for at least three.” Increased stamina, increases a man’s diligence.

The diligence required to achieve these tasks and goals does not allow men to become negligent in any one aspect of their life; they begin to see the holistic impact of personal physical preparation and training that spills into the broader community.

Countering the Effects of Isolation:

Table 18. Participant Responses about Approachability and Independence

P9	“I am much more intentional and focused in my interactions with people, especially those I consider friends.”
P1	I have “more community relationships with other F3 members, more time and energy with my family. More quality time with others, not just sitting around watching TV.”
P11	“It has been a great support for the emotional ups and downs, and a place to connect with other men that are experiencing similar challenges and realize I'm not the only one and there are others that can relate to me.”

Approachability: At least two men have to participate together if a workout is to be considered an F3 workout. Peer-led, the workouts are not supervised by professionals. There are no trainers dictating the activities of others. The leader is a participant-leader.

This structure requires a level of approachability, as the leader must persuade the other men to follow his instruction. The fellowship that is formed through a workout then spills out into a man’s life as he becomes more aware relationally. Given a nickname and renewed sense of belonging an F3 man feels the bond of the 2nd F (fellowship) countering the effect of isolation.

Rather than being relationally void, men intentionally seek out male friendships. This approachability has provided them with a “network of male friends.” As they struggle together,

these men build deeper bonds. These connections become their closest friendships. Struggling together, these men no longer feel isolated.

Independence: Rather than creating isolating independence, F3 creates an interdependence that increases the relational quality of men's lives. The diversity of participants also allows for sixty and seventy year-old men to work out alongside twenty and thirty year-old men, which produces a variety of life experiences and situations. This increases the likelihood of men, "seeking direction from others."²⁶

Noting that married men have the lowest levels of male friendships,²⁷ one man said that F3 has given him back a balance he lost after he married: "I was very unhappy and had no idea I was until I got to know the men who I am closest to in F3." These new relationships provide a mirror for self-examination that has given an impetus to step off the couch and engage with other men.

F3's Influence on Cainite Hyper-Masculinity

As previously discussed, the Cainite archetype is evident as a man reacts impulsively and aggressively, thereby dividing himself from others due to a sense of entitled. Such men are emotionally reactive, angry and egotistical. The bonds formed by men in F3 mitigate the influence of this archetype on a man.

²⁶ "Independence," *Operational Definitions*, 22.

²⁷ John Bingham, "2.5 Million Men 'Have No Close Friends,'" *The Telegraph* (November 14, 2015), accessed February 24, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/active/mens-health/11996473/2.5-million-men-have-no-close-friends.html>.

Countering the Effects of Impulsivity:

Table 19. Participant Responses about Impulse Command and Emotional Reactivity

P2	“I believe that I am a happier person because I am learning not to let the tough times impact me as much as they have previously.”
P4	“I would say that any event that causes me to use emotional strength to pull through tough segments is an exercise in emotional strengthening. Any emotional strength I can build will certainly benefit me in unexpected challenge. One of the nonspecific benefits to putting yourself into these challenges.”

Impulse Command: The rigorous challenges of F3 decrease a man’s engagement in impulsive behavior by altering drinking, eating and sleeping habits. While a man certainly does not master all his vices, F3 causes a man to live with more intentionality as he seeks not only to exercise early, but also to invest in a group of men who stretch beyond his work colleagues and familial points of contact. At one Bible study, a man shared that he now asks himself “why” before launching into a decision. This reflective pause has helped him and other men within the group to live with intentionality rather than impulsivity.

Emotional Reactivity: Feeling empowered from overcoming physical vices causes men to report greater emotional and mental health. As one man said, he finds “contentment in [his] life” which “has made [his] day to day life slower and manageable.” Life stresses seem more manageable than before because the emotional dimension is muted. By curbing impulsive behaviors, greater emotional control emerges that can also reduce a man’s aggressive tendencies.

Countering the Effects of Aggressiveness:

Table 16. Participant Responses about Aggressiveness and Anger Command

P12	“[I am] less likely to show stress [and] anger at little things.”
P7	“Challenges also remind me to not sweat the small stuff.”

Aggressiveness: When training new attendees to lead a workout, an instructor reminded

them to temper their aggression, because “there is a difference between being assertive and being aggressive. You want to instill confidence that you know what you are doing, but you need to be careful not to be too aggressive and push men away.”²⁸ Understanding that fine line between confidence and aggression is a key aspect of F3.

Placing men within a group of other men afford them the space to become more assertive. However, some workouts have splintered because of an aggressiveness that left others behind. As Larry Crabb describes it, “a manly man is not an aggressive man; he is an ACTIVE MAN, involved in offering quality relationships to others, more committed to developing a strength that others can enjoy than to achieving for himself a sense of power and control.”²⁹

By gathering as groups of men, F3 provides opportunities for men to navigate the inevitable conflict. Often if someone becomes aggressive, the nature of the F3 group is such that they will rein him in. A term has emerged within the community, called “mumble-chatter,” which is used to alleviate the stress of the situation. As Viktor Frankl observed in the severity of a concentration camp, “Humor was another of the soul's weapons in the fight for self-preservation. It is well known that humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds.”³⁰ Therefore, the mumble-chatter provides a momentary reprieve from the stress of the activity and conflict.

However, it also functions as a method of correction for a man. For example, if men start to critique the workout form of a former soldier, he has been known to make the cheeky reply that “these legs have been to combat. When you can say that, come back to me.” By doing so,

²⁸ Tim Seachrest, “Q-School Training” (presented at the F3Winston-Salem, Winston-Salem, NC, April 23, 2016).

²⁹ Larry Crabb, *The Silence of Adam*, 48.

³⁰ Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 43.

this man immediately commands respect, while gently chiding the aggressor. As M.J. Kehily notes with regard to male students, “Humorous exchanges are constitutive of heterosexual masculine identities...humor is a technique utilized for the regulation of masculinities and the negotiation of...hierarchies within pupil cultures.”³¹ Therefore, this banter, usually employing humor, points out the aggression, alleviates the tension when a man oversteps the line between being assertive and being aggressive, and establishes a hierarchy based upon respect.

Anger Command: Men in the company of other men learn how to take command of their anger. The simple release of physical aggression through an intense workout also helps men consider ways of releasing emotional tension without violence. Because of the communal nature of F3, which places men in close proximity to other men who will help redirect their anger, men exhibit greater command over anger as compared to their peers.

Countering the Effects of Divisiveness:

Table 16. Participant Responses about Egoism and Dominance

P4	Its “opened my eyes to a lot of folks I did not know in our community.”
P5	“suffice it to say that my closest friendships are F3 brothers and they have come alongside me like no other friends in my life.”

The improved command over anger and impulsivity makes men less divisive in their relationships. As men become more involved in F3, they notice they have an increased number and enhanced depth of relationships. One man stated that F3 has put him in contact with one to two hundred other men with whom he would not normally associate. Being exposed to men from different social spheres challenges him to explore what he values. One man shared that F3

³¹ M.J. Kehily and A. Nayak, “Lads and Laughter: Humour and the Production of Heterosexual Hierarchies,” *Gender and Education* 9, no. 1 (1997): 69.

caused him to “think more about how [he] treats people.” No longer seeing himself as autonomous, the man views himself as a vital member of a community.

Egoism: Also, because there is no need to preserve the ego, a desire to work collaboratively with other men arises. One man who participated in a simulated military training event called GoRuck reflected that such events force men to put the teams needs first. The mission of GoRuck is to produce “teamwork, leadership, camaraderie, smiles, and a gut-check worthy of Special Forces training. But the beauty of the Challenge is that it’s not about you, it’s about the people by your side, the individuals that become your team.”³² During these events, the cadre deliberately pushes the men into complete dependence on their teammates, so that no one person can see themselves as being superior.

Dominance: At one event, the cadre told the men to climb into a creek while carrying a 40 pound rucksack. While in the water, they were ordered to splash the men around them. One thirty-year-old took this command as an opportunity to display his dominance by antagonistically splashing his fellow partners; he wore a large grin while deluging the fifty-year-old veteran next to him. The older man knew the restraint needed to finish the grueling 24-hour challenge, and thus while he obeyed the command, he splashed the exuberant young man only weakly. This wiser man knew that by the end of the day the two would need to depend on each other to complete the demanding event. While they had limited control over their current situation, he knew and demonstrated to the group the need to show self-control not dominance towards each other.

³² “The GoRuck Challenge,” *GoRuck.com*, accessed October 18, 2016, <http://www.goruck.com/event-landing>

Whether it is GoRucks, relay races over 200 miles, 24-hour challenges, obstacle races, or other physical challenges, these events force not only an interdependence, but also expose the limitedness of an individual man. A man can no longer be dominant and divisively individualistic, because the men of F3 realize the need to “value the relationships that I know one day I will need.” F3 thus produces restraint and dependence.

Analysis

Within F3, men notice how the community has improved their obedience, servanthood, and commitment, while simultaneously decreasing their tendency towards passivity and hyper-masculinity. In their reflections about F3, men highlighted how this unique male community has produced transformative change in their lives. Many of them came in as runners, triathletes, and former athletes, but have discovered something more than a new workout club.

Of particular note is two men whose Christian life was ignited through F3. When asked what spiritual impact F3 has had, one responded:

It gave me a spiritual life. My first year with F3 saw me go from a complete skeptic to an outright seeker. I devoured Keller, Spurgeon and Lewis, changed churches and really started listening. I'd say I've wandered a bit in the past 9ish months, but mainly due to what I would call institutional issues as opposed to spiritual ones. Put simply F3 opened my heart by showing me other men working through the same questions I've always had. By showing me that a spiritual life wasn't easy, that it wasn't some “aha moment” where a switch gets flipped, F3 made that life accessible to me. I'm still in the process of getting there, but I'm miles further down the path than I was 3 years ago.

Another man wrote, “I have found Christ through the men of F3. I was desperate and in need of a foundation, and these men were there to help pick me up and show me a better way.” His testimony identifies the transformational process of F3. Working out physically can reveal a personal deficiency. It can expose a man's lack of self-sufficiency. It knocked him down, but if

the man submits to this exposure, he will receive a brotherhood of other men to pick him up and then push him in a new direction. This points him towards the sure foundation of Jesus Christ. Rather than hiding with Adam or following the way of Cain, he discovered the way of Christ. Through Christ, he hears the answer to the question “am I good enough?” That answer allows him to reject his Adamic tendencies, humble his Cainite ego, and begin to develop the traits of Biblical Masculinity.

Summary

The aim of this study was to explore the correlation between crucible events in a man’s life and their effect on his masculine identity. The hypothesis was that men who embrace challenges alongside other men become less passive and hyper-masculine, thereby enabling them to reengage with feminized environments. The data provided suggests four key findings regarding this hypothesis.

The first finding is that there is a high degree of correlation between the level of intentionality of a crucible event and the three different archetypes. Men who initiate challenges in their lives are associated with positive archetypal transitions. Even more specifically, physical challenges are the only ones to have positive trait correlations. The research therefore confirms the first part of the hypothesis, i.e., that men who embrace intentional physical challenges have rejected Adamic passivity.

The second finding is that these physical crucibles do not produce a noticeable change in men’s Cainite hyper-masculinity. There is no statistical difference between these scores. Though men articulate better impulse control, anger command, and a less divisive egoism, their numerical scores do not show a correlation between F3

participation and lower Cainite tendencies. As will be discussed in the final chapter, this means that physical challenges are not in themselves effective in reducing a man's divisive egoism.

The third finding is the positive influence male community has on a man's life. A noticeable and positive correlation of influence was found in both qualitative assessments and also measurement of the quantitative impact of male community. These results suggest that men benefit when they have multiple forms of male relationships in their lives, especially with peers and mentors.³³ A statistically significant correlation emerges between the provision of these two key types of relationships in F3 and higher Biblical Masculinity scores. This finding confirms that such relationships can mitigate against the negative impact of unsought challenges in a man's life by confirming a man's masculinity.

The fourth finding is that while physical struggles and male community are associated with positive scores in Biblical Masculinity, it is an association with F3, specifically, that increases a man's kindness score. This is an interesting insight, because kindness is a trait associated with the feminine in the *AMPM's* previous studies. When men are bound in community through something like F3, they are more willing to embody and be associated with this feminine trait. This finding was also reinforced in their willingness to engage the feminized spheres of parenting, community service and

³³ Interestingly, the mentee relationship—where a participant is investing in a younger man—shows no statistical correlation. This could lead to further discussion that mature men who are investing in younger men are not “benefiting” from those relationships. Instead, in those relationships they are demonstrating the kenosis of Christ described in Philippians 2:7, that of emptying themselves and taking on the form of a servant.

the church, thereby confirming the final part of the hypothesis, that men who have their precarious masculinity confirmed by an all-male community are more willing to embody and engage the feminine. Like Bosson, Vandello and Cheryan's psychological work, when men no longer feel their masculinity threatened, they are willing to reengage and even acknowledge the benefit of the feminine.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

When I discover who I am, I will be free.

— H.G. Wells, *The Invisible Man*

The importance of having other men in a man's life during crucible events is demonstrated in Steve Martin's novella, *The Pleasure of My Company*.¹ Martin writes about a neurotic young man, Daniel, who is struggling to shape and form a life that is bound by many obstacles. His sensation of being trapped is acutely demonstrated in his fear of stepping off a curb. He will not step off any six inch curbs because of his neurosis, thereby restricting his life to a single city block. Trapped, Daniel is an unambitious young man who fantasizes about his physical, relational, and sexual prowess, but avoids any opportunities to demonstrate this.

Over time Daniel develops an affection for his counselor's one-year-old son, and as that relationship matures, Daniel finds himself facing his own obstacles. He realizes that a personal transformation is necessary in order for this child, his mentee, to receive a better perspective on life.

Having successfully stepped off the curb only once, while grasping another man's arm, Daniel recognizes that he must fulfill his responsibility to this child, otherwise the child will become just as trapped as he is. By placing himself into this role of mentor, Daniel has the conviction that his mentee should not experience the same constraints he has known.

¹ Steve Martin, *The Pleasure of My Company* (New York, NY: Hachette Books, 2004), 157-159.

One afternoon Daniel decides that, “I could not leave Teddy with a legacy [of fear so] I pulled him toward the curb so he would not be like me...I put out one foot into the street, so he would not be like me.”² The relationship provides an avenue for Daniel to intentionally confront a challenge in order not only to improve the child’s life, but also his own. His willingness to confront the obstacle sparks a transformation that drastically reshapes the rest of Daniel’s story.

This novella illustrates the proverb, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Prov 27:17). When men form communal bonds through struggles, a mutual development takes place as their self-awareness grows, producing in return a higher level of self-confidence, kindness and commitment.

This is what the community of F3 provides for a man: not only an environment in which to be challenged physically, but also a dedicated community of other men that confirms masculine identity. It exposes men’s faults and shortcomings in order to challenge men to overcome these obstacles. It is an organization, as Ben Lupton describes it, that “may be seen, and studied, as [a] place where masculinities are constructed, refined and put to the test.”³ Through their participation, men have their masculinity tested, formed, refined and eventually confirmed. Due to the ongoing need a man has that his masculinity be confirmed, the church ought to constantly create environments such as F3 that test, refine and construct healthy masculine identities.

² Martin, *The Pleasure of My Company*, 158.

³ Ben Lupton, “Maintaining Masculinity: Men Who Do ‘Women’s Work’,” *British Journal of Management* 11 (September 2000): 34.

Shaping Future Ministry Practices

An interpretation of the above data for the practice of ministry suggests that ministries need to provide men with avenues where they will be intentionally challenged in close proximity to other men. Through being challenged, these men expose their sin tendencies either towards Adamic passivity or Cainite hyper-masculinity. Such opportunities provide men transformative experiences that confirm a purposeful masculinity and help them form male communal bonds as preparation for reengaging with the feminine.

Beyond Pancake Breakfasts and Annual Retreats

As Stu Weber explains, relational connectedness is the essential starting point for male ministries: “When I connect with other guys, I feel fulfilled, vision-oriented, energetic.”⁴ Men’s ministries should therefore reduce individualism and provide men the opportunity to meet, identify and connect with spiritual elders and brothers.

From men hesitant to come to F3, the number one excuse given is that “I need to get in shape to come work out with guys.”⁵ Rather than accommodate that excuse, F3 has developed a principle that says: “Make It Hard and They Will Come.”⁶ This is based on the scene in *Tom Sawyer* where Tom persuades other boys to paint the fence for him:

Tom Sawyer, Twain tells us, had “discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain.” That is the difference between

⁴ Stu Weber, “What It Takes to Reach Men: Strengthening the Church’s Silent Minority,” *Leadership* 15, no. 4 (September 1994): 125.

⁵ “Top Five EH Excuses,” *F3nation*, n.d., accessed February 24, 2017, <http://f3nation.com/top-five-eh-excuses>.

⁶ This concept, however, is also buffered by the mantra discussed earlier that every man is to “work his own workout.” Men are reminded before the workout that this is a peer-lead venture and that the leader is not functioning as a trained professional. Therefore, men are to adapt due to any physical limitations or doctor recommendations.

work and play for a man. For us, the great law that Tom discovered translates into a premise of F3: Make It Hard and They Will Come...this is both counter-intuitive and counter-cultural...in our modern life of ease there is very little that is hard. Most of us face no existential threat more dangerous than choking on a chicken wing. As a result, any man who wants to be a modern-day warrior has to deliberately search for hard things in life...⁷

Yet many church ministries seek to reduce the obstacles to male participation, thereby removing opportunities for men to face ordeals and undergo a hero's quest. Because of membership decline, decreasing revenue, and disengaged men, many churches are trying to create attractive, momentum-building, and non-threatening events. In doing so, these ministries fail to create sustainably transformative groups.

For some churches, the extent of their male ministry is an early morning Bible study that revolves around coffee and conversation. The fallacy in this approach is that men are less likely to connect when eye-to-eye with other men than they are when working shoulder-to-shoulder. As mentioned earlier, Richard Schwartz has noticed that most "guys stand side by side, looking at the world together."⁸ Weber says, "the quickest way to a false start was to say, 'Let's get on the bandwagon and have a few donuts and see how long we can last.'"⁹ If these gatherings remain social introspections, they may become misidentified as feminine. As the research suggests, men need more than a point of relational connection; they also need a challenge to overcome together.

⁷ David Redding and Tim Whitmire, *Freed To Lead: F3 and the Unshackling of the Modern-Day Warrior* (Charlotte, NC: Iron Project, 2014), 85.

⁸ As quoted in Billy Baker, "The Biggest Threat Facing Middle-Age Men Isn't Smoking or Obesity. It's Loneliness," *Boston Globe*, last modified March 9, 2017, accessed March 13, 2017, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2017/03/09/the-biggest-threat-facing-middle-age-men-isn-smoking-obesity-loneliness/k6saC9FnnHQCUBf5mJ8okL/story.html>.

⁹ Weber, "What it Takes to Reach Men," 125.

Pancake breakfasts and male discussion groups fail to provide the catalytic impact that persistent physical challenges afford. It is not enough simply to be vulnerable; the groups must also provide conviction and correction.

David Dusek is critical of most men's gatherings at churches.¹⁰ He suggests that most fail to lead to the real bonded friendships that demand accountability and behavioral change. True accountability requires clear standards and consequences to guide men as they overcome their struggles. Instead, most remain superficial gatherings that do not generate real change because they lack "calculated adversities," which Avolio describes as the motor of change.¹¹

In contrast to superficial men's breakfast gatherings, men's retreats may include a hike or other physical activity. However, these tend to be disconnected from the regularity of a man's life. Schwartz maintains that regularity is essential for men to forge and maintain friendships.¹² By removing men from their routine, a temporary disruption occurs, but most men lack the ability to effectively integrate these new friendships into their daily lives upon their return. Annual male retreats therefore may not create the sustainable impact or depth of a male community that develops through weekly participation.

The intentionality of a frequent physical struggle is what differentiates F3 from other men's ministries. It combines the social connection of regular gatherings with the disruptive benefits of men's retreats. While the workouts occur at set places and times, the precise regiment of that day and the group's attendance remains uncertain. This flexibility and adaptation means

¹⁰ David Dusek, "Beyond the Pancake Breakfast: Using Events to Spark Real Friendships," in *Porn-Free Church: Raising Up Gospel Communities to Destroy Secret Sins* (Owosso, MI: Covenant Eyes, 2012), 189.

¹¹ Bruce J. Avolio, "Examining Leadership and Organizational Behavior Across the Boundaries of Science," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 66 (December 2014): 290.

¹² As referenced in Baker, "The Biggest Threat Facing Middle-Age Men Isn't Smoking or Obesity."

that F3 offers the “bounded instability” Quinn argues is necessary for effective disruptions.

Therefore, F3’s method of developing peer-to-peer lead physical crucibles is essential.

In an article called “Reaching the Disconnected Male,” Patrick Morley argues, by contrast, that the method used to attract men is unimportant:

[Attracting men] is best accomplished by a purpose-driven momentum-building event built around a topic men are drawn to, such as sports, financial success or fathering skills....[T]hese upbeat, non-threatening activities put the cookies on an easy-to-reach shelf where disconnected men can get at them. But the event itself is not the most important tactic here: it’s men engaging other men that makes a difference.¹³

For Morley, not only is the magnet that attracts the man inconsequential, but also the event needs to be “upbeat” and “non-threatening.” While this may temporarily fill stadiums or invigorate rallies like *GodMen*, it does not provide mechanisms for men to receive a necessary and persistent masculine confirmation. If masculinity is indeed precarious, as Vandello argues, it has to be threatened and hard won. F3 combines the mode of attraction—a workout—with the catalyst of transformation: intentional physical crucibles.

Therefore F3’s physical challenges become more than the magnet that attracts, because they are also the catalytic crucibles that encourage holistic transformation and communal bonding. This is F3’s strategy, because the First F (Fitness) is extremely threatening to a man’s masculinity. The high-threat challenge of F3 is the exact opposite of Morley’s suggestion to be upbeat and non-threatening.

Rodney Cooper differentiates transformative groups, such as F3, from confirmative groups. For Cooper, the essential difference between these groups is whether a man can and will

¹³ Patrick Morley, “Reaching the Disconnected Male : How to Move Men on the Fringe into Active, Focused Discipleship,” *Leadership* (Winter 2001) 79.

expose his weaknesses to a group of men so that he can be challenged to grow into Christlikeness.¹⁴ Transformative groups are neither passively dismissive of a man's weakness in telling him that his missteps are "okay," nor are they aggressively punitive by leaving a man feeling beat-up and inadequate. Instead, transformative groups reveal deficiencies while offering hope-filled correctives. Each workout offers an opportunity to reveal a deficiency while also providing the inspiration to improve.

Like Avolio's theory on disruptive change, these experiences "become catalyzing agents promoting change and transformation."¹⁵ Through the physical challenges of F3, a man's weakness is constantly on display as there will always be someone faster or stronger than him on a given exercise. However, there is hope that as he continues to show up, he will notice his own personal strides forward.

This alters his personal belief system so that he no longer feels helpless, as Seligman's theory of *Learned Optimism* argues. With a new belief system, the man has a new, hopeful attitude to confront future adversity. This allows men to experience the positive transformations of pushing themselves to points of physical failure. Having been pushed to physical failure, they build resilient strength that prepares them to examine other emotional, relational, and vocational failures:

Father failures, leadership failures, husband failures—every man has failed, so they can identify with failure. Men's speakers must be able to say, "Here's what happened to me. I often blow it." But transparency is not enough; you've got to

¹⁴ Rodney Cooper, *Shoulder to Shoulder: The Journey from Isolation to Brotherhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 112.

¹⁵ Bruce J. Avolio, "Examining Leadership and Organizational Behavior Across the Boundaries of Science," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 66 (December 2014): 290.

model open conviction, the commitment to grow beyond the failure and in Christ.¹⁶

By showing up at the next workout, a man is demonstrating his commitment to transformative growth.

Competitive Missions

Ultimately, male community groups within the church cannot remain passive, introspective events of checking in over hot coffee. Instead, they should become events that inspire transformative groups and effectively threaten a man's masculinity so that he may be reoriented towards a need greater than himself.

While F3 will create physically grueling events called CSAUP (Completely Stupid and Utterly Pointless) in order to produce concentrated crucible experiences that elicit great emotion, fatigue, and fellowship,¹⁷ this same framework could be developed for male mission groups. By producing physically grueling, relationally intense and other oriented service opportunities, men may rise up to the challenge that they have felt missing from the church.

This emphasis upon competitive challenges could utilize Charlie Hardy's theory of "competitive altruism." Competitive altruism is a process "through which individuals attempt to outcompete each other in terms of generosity"¹⁸ so "that altruistic group members [may] receive more status. They were more respected, held in higher esteem, and were more likely to be chosen as a group leader."¹⁹ Through competitive altruism, men are challenged to show greater kindness,

¹⁶ Weber, "What it Takes to Reach Men," 128.

¹⁷ Redding, *Freed to Lead*, 105-106.

¹⁸ Charlie L. Hardy and Mark Van Vugt, "Nice Guys Finish First: The Competitive Altruism Hypothesis," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 32, no. 10 (October 2006): 1403.

¹⁹ Hardy, "Competitive Altruism," 1411.

consideration for the other, and commitment to a cause, all of which has been defined as part of Biblical Masculinity.

Since F3 encourages personal competition, this would allow it to be redirected towards societal needs. As witnessed within F3, the competitiveness from the workouts spills into service initiatives, where men compete to be more generous. This competitive spirit drives men to broaden their societal responsibility as they mentor students at Title 1 schools, conduct clothing drives, lead workouts at the local men's shelter, and other service oriented events. After one event in an impoverished area of West Charlotte, the community's organizer noted that he had not seen so many men actively participate in their non-profit's work.

Overseas mission could also provide a more concentrated and intentional arena to catalyze male transformation. In January 2017, eight men who are part of Waypoint Community Church and F3 went on an overseas mission trip to Peru. This crucible experience challenged them relationally, spiritually, emotionally and vocationally. One man reflected that as a married man he had never intentionally spent ten days away from work and family responsibilities before. Another mentioned that while there is bonding at CSAUP events, he experienced greater "faith and heart rebuilding" on this mission trip, noticing that "the chance for God to work on me is better than anything I can do, [because] working on a mission trip is refueling the soul." The time provided them with a unique experience to examine themselves spiritually, emotionally and relationally alongside other men.

This trip lacked the physical intensity of a F3 CSAUP event, however, and Scheinfeld's research regarding adventure therapy indicates that "sharing emotions without assistive activities

can be unproductive for some men.”²⁰ Therefore, the F3 men sought to create their own physical activities. A non-F3 man was surprised by this group’s energy and that “they never slowed down.” He commented that the F3 men would rise early to run through the village. For these men, however, the physical exertion was an essential part of the way they processed emotionally, relationally and spiritually. More work should be done to determine ways to harness the physicality of F3’s CSAUP philosophy into mission projects in order to offer men methods to process the emotional, spiritual and relational impact of these trips.

Seasons of a Man’s Ministry

As an exploratory study, this research does not suggest that these transformative principles are limited to F3. Instead it highlights F3 as an organization that synthesizes the psychological theory of “precarious manhood,” the anthropological concept of the “Big Impossible,” the literary studies about the “hero’s quest,” and David Murrow’s work on why men hate going to church. In so doing, F3 confirms the need of the masculine spirit for transitional struggles during the different seasons of a man’s life, and the necessity for a community of brotherly love to walk men through those transitions. The result is a group of confident men willing to engage and lead in the egalitarian church.

It is to be expected and should be encouraged that other ministries are also demonstrating this form of transitional development in men’s lives effected through physical crucibles. In fact, while F3 primarily addresses men who have hit stasis in and near their mid-life transition, other ministries should be seeking to provide similar environments during other transition stages. By

²⁰ David E. Scheinfeld, Aaron B. Rochlen, and Sam J. Buser, “Adventure Therapy: A Supplementary Group Therapy Approach for Men,” *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 12, no. 2 (April 2011): 191.

utilizing Levinson's theory on male adult development, other men's ministries can identify particular stages of male development and the task men need to complete during that season.

For example, men in their twenties would benefit from ministries that help to challenge them in the formation and building of an initial life structure. Men in their fifties and sixties would benefit from ministries that address issues of legacy and significance. By developing, encouraging and partnering with these ministries, it would allow men to address their precarious masculinity. However, this research also suggests that these ministries cannot stand apart from the feminized church, but need to emphasize a reintegration. Therefore, the church would benefit by engaging and developing male-only ministries rather than being antagonistic against them.

Deerfoot Lodge

A notable example of a mission for young men who are transitioning from boyhood to manhood is Deerfoot Lodge in Speculator, New York, an all-boys camp developed using many of the principles found within F3. This rugged Christian camp focuses on equipping boys with leadership skills through challenges, initiation rituals and male community, and by placing them alongside Christ-centered men in order that they might witness the Gospel lived out. Like F3, Deerfoot invites campers of all faiths or no faith, but believes spiritual transformation can occur when young men are exposed to challenges that create a greater self-awareness, because they have placed themselves alongside Christian counselors who demonstrate a purposeful masculinity.

Deerfoot has also noticed the need for mentoring and adventure as models through which faith might be explored:

In our society, there are few guides. We have become content to avoid challenges and responsibilities rather than face them. We have decided to serve ourselves instead of God....[T]he Guide Program at Deerfoot Lodge attempts to confront young men with the challenges of life. In confrontation, each individual is given a chance to learn about himself, his relationship with other men, his responsibility to society and relationship to God. It is hoped that through increased knowledge and sensitivity, guides will become “ones who point the way.”²¹

The camp environment fosters relationships. Deerfoot dispels the illusion that you can make it by yourself. It takes the whole group to get the cabin ready for inspection. Instead of putting your individually-packaged meal into the microwave, you have to ask, “Will you pass the rolls please?” You learn your strokes, two campers to a canoe....You realize you never would have made it to the top of the mountain without the encouragement of other campers. Relationships do not simply happen; they are *built intentionally*.²²

Most noticeable is the intentional effort Deerfoot makes to facilitate types of challenges that will cause transformative change similar to F3’s mission. Their Guide program offers youth a hero’s quest. Moreover, after undergoing physical crucibles, these young men are reintegrated with their homes and communities with a heightened sense of societal responsibility. Deerfoot, like F3, seeks to challenge young men so that they may begin to demonstrate a purposeful masculinity.

Pastor Covenant Groups

Another area where this research could be used in the practice of ministry is the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterian’s pastor covenant groups (E.C.O.). As part of the denominational requirements for E.C.O., pastors are challenged to meet face-to-face in covenant groups that they might be challenged and encouraged. One of the proposed strategies for these

²¹ Grosvenor C Rust and Sandy Hull, *The Story of Deerfoot Lodge* (Speculator, NY: Deerfoot Lodge, 2002), 72.

²² Rust, *The Story of Deerfoot Lodge*, 112.

pastor covenant groups is that they undergo an examination under the rubric of the five categories used in this research: physical, relational, spiritual, emotional and vocational.²³

This research suggests that it would strengthen such groups if these covenant groups participated in physical challenges. Like Scheinfeld's adventure therapy, physical crucibles would expedite the group's bond by creating an interdependence and space for the group "to freely share [providing] greater opportunity to self-disclose and process emotions."²⁴ A stronger bond would emerge within the groups, thereby allowing the men to dig deeper below the surface issues. This would help improve their "recognition of 'moments that matter,' [which] is an essential step in the acceleration of leadership development."²⁵ Through active participation in challenges, those efforts would probably reveal the pastors' tendencies towards passivity or hyper-masculinity.

This would open them up to areas in themselves towards which they may be blind, and give them a practical lens to view how their health in those five areas may be effecting their personality. For example, if a pastor acknowledges having experienced relational challenges since the last meeting, the group might examine the pastor's assertiveness and dependability. Examining a man's emotional reactivity and anger when confronted with emotional challenges may illuminate areas of growth. Similarly, if a man has experienced a vocational challenge, efforts to address and restore trust might be warranted.

²³ James Singleton, "Pastoral Covenant Groups: A Proposed Structure or Starting Point," n.d. Unpublished working document for the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. Attached as Appendix D.

²⁴ David E. Scheinfeld, Aaron B. Rochlen, and Sam J. Buser, "Adventure Therapy: A Supplementary Group Therapy Approach for Men," *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 12, no. 2 (April 2011): 192.

²⁵ Annick Janson, "Extracting Leadership Knowledge from Formative Experiences," *Leadership* 4, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 78.

Church Planting

A final practical impact of this research might be that the agentic, risk-taking and outward-oriented nature of F3 could produce an effective environment in which to recruit church planters. The decentralized and multiplicative model of F3 that is infused into the men causes them to become tired of the status quo, and fosters the desire to recruit new men and to purposefully multiply groups when they reach “problematic” sizes.²⁶ The result is a movement designed to plant, grow and multiply small communities.

This philosophy helps to shape and influence a church-planting mentality. By mobilizing a community of men, F3 helps to push the church out into a post-Christendom culture. By not utilizing a facility or professional staff, F3 is effectively demonstrating a missional mindset to move towards the gospel needs of a community and equip men to be leaders where they gather.

Rev. Philip Wilson, an Anglican church planter from South Carolina, credits F3 with salvaging his ministry and helping him reconsider his approach to church planting. He writes,

F3 saved my ministry. I was unhealthy, stressed, lonely and ready to walk away. My family was suffering because of my mood and outlook on life. F3 gave me confidence again in myself. I began to learn what I was capable of, but it also gave me energy. I needed a way to deal with stress besides eating all the time.

Running now provides me with some time to go and be alone and clear my head. The men of F3 provide me brotherhood and encouragement to keep going and not giving up, plus I get to be a real person around them. They know I am a pastor but they treat me like I am one of the guys. I was kept from walking away because I was given hope in friendships and health in my physical body. Something that I so desperately needed in my life.

²⁶ Unlike a gym, where the owners and marketing staff push expansion for profitably, if an F3 participant wants to see the workout sustained in his community he has to take personal responsibility for inviting and investing in the mission. The end-user is thus also the main promoter. This is a key element to a "starfish" organization, which emphasizes personal responsibility for the group's success.

F3 also taught me about assimilation. The church can learn so from the COT and the BOM.²⁷ F3 instantly assimilates men and I know that is a huge part of the success. No hoops to jump through, just show up and you are a part of us. This is seen in going from FNG to a named member by the end of the workout. Where I don't give nicknames at the end of the church service I try to have my leadership focus on instant assimilation and getting people plugged in.

He was preparing to quit church planting because it had become too challenging and isolating, but getting involved in F3 reinvigorated his interest and commitment. By participating in F3, he witnessed Brafman's "starfish" organization at work: "You automatically become part of the leadership...the moment you join."²⁸ Participation immediately assimilates a man into a leadership responsibility. He therefore identified the need for initiation rituals and a sense of immediate belonging for men within his church.

Rev. Patrick Cherry, an E.C.O. church planter and member of F3 in Wake Forest, N.C writes,

Church planting is a trying, exhausting, challenging, and beautiful endeavor but requires so much [of] the planter. To be successful and faithful requires more than knowledge and faith. It requires energy and a larger sense of purpose. My ministry changed when I first [attended] F3. Not only did I strengthen my [body], an often forgotten part of our soul care, but I found something I was missing: friends. I can honestly say that finding community with fellow men is a challenge in ministry, but F3 has given me a community where I am just one of the guys... We are a group of leaders, sharpening one another. I joined with these hopes [of leadership] in mind, but what I didn't expect was to learn a way of leading that would shape how I view my ministry.

²⁷ These terms are part of the closing of an F3 workout. The COT was addressed earlier as the "Circle of Trust." The BOM is in reference to "The Ball of Man" where the prayer is done by gathering tightly together and laying hands on each other. Also, FNG is the term given to a man before he receives a name: it stands for "Friendly New Guy."

²⁸ Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (New York, NY: Portfolio, 2014), 37.

F3 is effectively modeling a peer-to-peer led community that demonstrates the move from clergy-centered ministry to an equipped and empowered laity.²⁹

This change in missional approach is especially important within the egalitarian churches where missional forms of ministry have been deemphasized, but where there is a longing that they be reclaimed:

When the Reformers...started to deemphasize the apostolic nature of the church, they inadvertently lessened the sending nature of that apostolic church. The church that “reformed” lost touch with the God who sends, and the mission of the church suffered. “Lost in this deletion was an emphasis on the church’s ‘being authoritatively sent’ by God into the world to participate fully in God’s mission.” This loss of missional focus also led to a loss of missional thinking.³⁰

The apostolic nature of F3 assists in training men to engage with their broader community as a mission field. This research has shown that F3 helps to attract, equip and send men who are participating in the egalitarian church.

However, missionally-oriented men need to be prepared to reintegrate with the feminine:

Leaders who are trying to encourage the church to “move into the neighborhoods” and be more “missional” only need to look to the women in a congregation for experience. “As the church moves into the community, they find that women have already been there. In the schools, in the parks with their kids, in community organizations, with neighbors,” says Kara Powell. “Community life is even more important today and women are already the fabric of the community.”³¹

As the research has shown, in order for men to reintegrate with the feminine spirit they need to have their masculinity confirmed. If F3 has effectively confirmed a man’s masculine identity, he should be ready to embrace the feminine.

²⁹ Dana Allin, “Shift One: From ‘Clergy-Centered’ To An ‘Unleashed Laity’,” Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, September 17, 2014, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://eco-pres.org/blog/shift-one-from-clergy-centered-to-an-unleashed-laity>.

³⁰ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 29.

³¹ Tod E Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015).

While David Murrow's work shows that gender gaps are most noticeable in egalitarian churches, 83% of the F3 participants in this study attend an egalitarian church. The research also reveals that 61% of the participants plan to be more engaged in their local church over the next six months. This suggests that these men are willing to take the risk and cast the vision necessary to lead their local churches alongside women.

While institutional tradition attracts stabilizing personalities, the risk-taking associated with church planting engages the purposeful masculine spirit:

Younger churches seem somewhat more successful in attracting and retaining men. This suggests that as a church ages, it loses its men and is unable to attract more. What causes this? Think of the needs of a young church. Start-up congregations need men's gifts. Risks must be taken...women stay loyal because of the relationships they've developed, but the less relational men fall away. Men need vision—not just relationships—to stay motivated in the church.³²

The apostolic desire, encouraged through F3, will push these communities to start embracing the risk of church planting. F3 is therefore becoming an effective vehicle for church planters to submerge themselves into their communities. In doing so, they are “winning the right to be heard”³³ by establishing relationships with other men, in order to reemerge with the gospel response to man's persistent question of "am I good enough?"

Whether through male transformative groups, camping ministries for boys, pastoral covenant groups, or church planting, there are implications in this research for future ministries. To reengage men, the church must consider how to persistently and intentionally place men alongside other men in order to challenge them physically and thereby form an interdependency that they might reintegrate with the feminine within the church. By providing these men with an

³² David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 55.

³³ This is an incarnational form of ministry, similar to Young Life, which was lived out when an F3 participant turned to this researcher/pastor and told him, “You are not a pastor; you are just one of us.”

environment where they can push themselves alongside other men, the church will produce men who are more willing to actively embrace the feminized environment of the church with obedience, servanthood and commitment.

Limitations and Further Research

Crucible Consolidation

One limitation of the initial research was the way in which the crucible events were presented to the participants. Since it was difficult to assess the intentionality of some crucibles, this research limited intentionality to identifiable situations, such as marathons, mud-runs, marriage and planned pregnancies. A more direct question used to assess intentionality around job changes and other crucibles will be necessary for future research.

Similarly, the division of the crucibles into five categories was not meant to be water-tight, only illustrative. Yet the format of the questionnaire may have suggested that a particular crucible could only impact one of the five areas. Also, the participants responded with a higher than expected rate of crucible experiences. The subjectivity of crucible experiences needs to be acknowledged and removed from future research.

The subjectivity factor could have also resulted in men wanting to claim more challenges than warranted. With the preceding research, qualitative data and initial results, there is enough evidence to suggest correlation between intentional crucibles and archetypal association.

Causation, though, cannot be confirmed. Possible further research could therefore take a group of

men through a one-year longitudinal study from non-participation in F3 to the completion of an event like the Blue Ridge Relay.³⁴

Exploratory

This first limitation highlights that the research was exploratory in nature. The intention was not to claim F3's superiority as an initiation ritual for the modern man, but to explore the different elements and strengths of F3 in order to identify further areas for study. Utilizing the extensive personality assessment meant the research was broad in its approach to and assessment of men. Also, the pool that registered for this research was limited and self-selecting. Because the researcher utilized his social media contacts, the pool was highly slanted towards personal contacts. Also, the extensive amount of time necessary to complete the assessment may have meant that only participants who were diligent, assertive and committed finished the task. A passive, Adamic man might well have withdrawn from the study.

This trend is most noticeable in the extreme differences between the normed population of the *AMPM* and the participants in this research. When compared to the psychometric scoring data for men, the average responder to this research had statistically significant differences in dependability, trust, kindness, orientation, self-discipline, diligence, independence, approachability, impulse command, aggressiveness, anger command and egoism. A larger research pool that goes more broadly beyond this exploratory group is necessary to generate the data that could confirm these initial results. The hypothesis is that the marginal differences identified between the F3 and non-F3 men could be more statistically significant if the non-F3

³⁴ The Blue Ridge Relay is an annual run in North Carolina that covers 208 miles. Six, nine or twelve person teams spend over twenty-four hours running and driving in a van. In 2016, over seventy-five F3 teams participated. Fitness and fellowship bonds are highlighted during this extended event, which also requires a team's planning and commitment all summer.

population were not as similar in spiritual, physical activity, socio-economic stability, and educational backgrounds as the F3 population.³⁵

Another aspect that requires further study is the connection with Martin Seligman's work on learned optimism. While the *AMPM* does attribute an optimism score to each participant, there is no statistically noticeable difference between the F3 and non-F3 population in terms of their optimism score. However, there is a magnitude of correlation score of 0.49, which is marginally significant, between Biblical Masculinity and Optimism scores. This suggests that Seligman's proposal that optimism may influence a man's capability of overcoming crucible events could also apply to a man's willingness to demonstrate obedience, commitment and servanthood. A causation study could be done exploring intentional physical crucibles as methods for rewriting a man's beliefs, as presented in Seligman's *Learned Optimism*.³⁶

Non-Hegemonic Masculine Identities

Because of the cultural climate at the time of this research, it is also necessary to address the limitations of non-hegemonic masculinity. Essentially, this work has focused on men whose masculinity is precarious and not "spoiled."³⁷ This distinction is essential because the man who

³⁵ While demographic questions did not examine the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the participants, F3 participants and the researcher's social media connections are typically highly-educated, caucasian men in the Southern United States. However, due to their assumed similarities, this also reinforces preceding research from Maslow and Levinson that men whose basic needs have been secured, need to intentionally seek challenging events.

³⁶ Martin Seligman suggests that adversity establishes beliefs that generate consequences. He argues that if a person disrupts those beliefs, a new belief system emerges. Rather than using cognitive therapy techniques alone, the physical crucibles promoted through this research could be an effective tool to manufacture adversity, thereby exposing, disrupting and challenging a man's beliefs.

³⁷ This is a term used in a case-study in Connell's work: "In the school as well as the family, Adam did not fit the template. It seems that he came to see himself as having a *spoiled* masculinity. He recalls a moment when such a perception came to him. It is not surprising that it was a moment of sport..."

Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 92.

views his masculinity identity under a hegemonic norm is striving to conform to that cultural norm; whereas spoiled masculinities form a culturally subordinate style of masculinity.

As David Gilmore's work suggests, the need for ritualistic initiation and tendencies towards hyper-masculinity or passivity are not restricted to heterosexual men. Gilmore details the Sambia ritual that involves homosexual behavior as part of the rites that transition a boy into manhood. Furthermore, he writes:

Greek and Roman texts are full of homosexuality in action... These Greek and Roman homosexuals did not necessarily give up their claim to masculinity. So long as this homosexuality conformed to current images of the 'male' (active) role in sex play, it was entirely compatible with, in fact, supportive of, a fully masculine image in the society at large...³⁸

This suggests that the precarious nature of masculinity is based upon its relationship to the culture's hegemonic masculinity, and is not specifically tied to one's sex acts.

If a man identifies as homosexual, or struggles with gender identity issues, however, his masculinity may no longer be precarious, because it does not align with the hegemonic norms.³⁹ Similarly, if a man has had his masculine identity distorted due to rape or abuse, it too is no longer precarious. Full consideration of these issues, an understanding of the alternate forms of masculinity, and theologically-informed responses thereto, are beyond the scope of this research.

However, caution should be taken when putting men of distorted or "spoiled" masculinity through intentional crucibles with groups of other men, as this could do further damage to their masculine identities. R.W. Connell interviews a homosexual man who vividly recalls an interaction with his father that eroded his masculinity:

³⁸ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 154.

³⁹ One of the eleven traits Mihalik identifies as masculine is that it is anti-homosexual. James R. Mahalik et al., "Development of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory," *Psychology of Men* (2003): 3-25.

Adam remembers his relationship with his father changing and becoming “closed,” though it is not clear at what age. And this memory comes out:

He bought my brother a cricket bat for Christmas and he wouldn’t buy me one. He’d say I couldn’t play cricket and things like throwing a ball. How a man throws a ball is different to how a woman throws a ball. I didn’t want to throw a ball in front of my Dad because I knew it would not look right, it wouldn’t be like the way a good, strong boy should throw it. And once, I remember, I was brave enough to throw it. And he made fun of me and said I threw it like a girl.⁴⁰

Further research should therefore be carried out to examine the point at which crucibles within male-only environments are no longer effective in challenging and confirming a man’s masculinity, and even further exacerbate a spoiled, distorted or damaged masculine identity.

In an interesting parallel, F3 leaders have noticed that men who are former Division I athletes or former military are often the hardest to invite to F3. One theory is that these men find the physical challenges stark reminders of the men they once were and are no longer. This means these men do not leave F3 workouts confident, but deflated.

Gender

The intention of this research was to focus solely upon manhood and masculinity. Yet what about women and their need for challenges as mechanisms to confirm their womanhood? Furthermore, can co-ed environments produce similar catalytic experiences? Both are valid questions that are not addressed in this initial study, but do emerge from this work.

If the precarious manhood research is valid, it provides a major incentive for male-only workout groups: when in a male-only environment, men’s masculine identity is confirmed not threatened. If men work out in co-ed situations, will they receive the same confirmation? This should be examined in further research, in light of an anecdote shared by the researcher’s wife:

⁴⁰ Connell, *The Men and the Boys*, 91.

Recently she went to her gym for a boot camp workout similar to F3, except it was a co-ed group. During the workout, participants were told to run five repetitions of 200 meter sprints. She was placed in a group with five men and found that during each repetition, an unspoken challenge emerged from the group of men. During each sprint one of the men broke from the group and tried unsuccessfully to race and beat her.

While this is similar to the internal competition that routinely emerges within F3 workouts, something different happens when a man is competing against a woman. Based on Bosson and Vandello's research, in this co-ed situation, those five men left the workout feeling their masculinity had been threatened. Had something similar occurred at F3, they may have been humbled in the moment of losing the footrace, but they would still have left with their masculinity sharpened overall. As suggested by the research regarding precarious masculinity, once the feminine is introduced into a setting, a man's masculinity is threatened.

Further Research

The above insight makes addressing gender issues both complicated and necessary, suggesting research should be conducted through comparative studies which isolate the five main variables: all-male, free, outdoors, closing with prayer, and peer-to-peer leadership development mechanisms. If a woman were to regularly participate in a workout, by default it would not be an F3 workout. However, due to F3's influence in the lives of married men, another group has begun, called FiA (Females in Action). While FiA retains the other elements of F3—namely that it is free, peer-to-peer led and outdoors—FiA is a female-only community. A comparative study could be made between the two groups in order to identify similarities and differences. For example: a FiA member told the researcher that most women's friends are "situational friends"

who come and go based upon similar life situations like marriage, employment and children.

Does FiA afford women longer-term friendships?

While boot camp classes at the YMCA or Crossfit gyms provide co-ed populations, these groups are also very different in intent and structure from F3. Both the YMCA and Crossfit charge for membership, thereby altering another unique dynamic of F3, i.e., that membership is strictly through participation. In F3 a man belongs because he shows up. At the YMCA and Crossfit, membership is no longer precarious. Payment alters people's motivations, because when people pay they are usually more concerned about their individual workout than the group's performance. They are less likely to be aware of or motivated to help the struggling ones keep up. A comparison between these gyms and F3 could be made in order to examine the type of community bonding that occurs through voluntary participation versus contractual agreements.

Also, since "Faith" is part of F3's moniker, the group naturally attracts men who are looking for an arena in which to develop spiritually. The requirement to close with a prayer means that men of different faiths are exposed to men who are willing to pray publicly. Many of the workouts offer a Bible study at a nearby coffee shop and the workouts close with an invitation. While men in a Crossfit gym may experience the same physical and communal benefits, the spiritual exposure and development may not be as intentional. By intentionally providing and promoting opportunities for faith to be displayed, F3 men of no faith are connected with men of deep faith. A comparison between an all-male Crossfit community and F3 could identify whether the intentional spiritual elements are having an impact. One hypothesis is that since Faith is part of the brand, F3 initially attracts faithful men who are then encouraged to

make this group available to men of all faiths or no faith, who might otherwise be hesitant to join because of that term.

Similarly, the November Project out of Boston might be examined because it is participatory, co-ed and outdoors. These workouts are not peer-led, however, which would produce another variable. November Project does not describe itself as a leadership development mechanism as F3 does, and therefore, a comparison between the benefits of peer-led over professional-led groups might reveal if F3's reinvigoration of community leadership is more effective as a result of this intentionality. The above are thus examples of other groups that might help produce a deeper examination into the uniqueness of F3 identified in this study.

Theological Response to Man's Question: The Gospel Promise

The existential question men struggle with is "Am I good enough?" As Martin Seligman argues: "each of us carries a word in his heart, a 'no' or a 'yes'."⁴¹ Through crucible experiences men uncover that word within their heart. By embracing these challenges, men heed the call of Jesus Christ to undergo the hero quest. They separate through self-denial, experience a sacrificial ordeal and reintegrate into social responsibility: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24). Men follow Him into the depths of their inner-souls in search of that answer.

The F3 community has struggled to identify what distinguishes a man who will accept the invitation to show up to a workout and follow that quest into the unknown. It seems that motivation to initiate and follow through has to pre-exist. There are two types of men at the end of their first F3 workout. Both are dry-heaving, having been pushed to their physical limits. For

⁴¹ Seligman, *Learned Optimism*, 16.

one this is a sign of embracing the challenge, but for the other it is a public display of weakness. The former returns eager to push through the next obstacle, the latter disappears into the morning gloom. F3 catalyzes—increases the rate of change—that is already stirring in a man.

There is therefore a humility and vulnerability that comes from participating in F3's public displays of masculinity. Recently, a man asked his mentee: "How did you decide to become serious about your spiritual journey?" The young man replied, "Someone invited me to an F3 workout; I went and I enjoyed the experience. At the end of the workout, the men circled up and they ended in a prayer....and I decided that I wanted what they had." Having struggled alongside other men, this man discovered a spiritual longing within himself.

This desire requires a bit of divine disruption, as one participant articulated in the follow-up responses: "The Lord impressed on me [through F3] that the faith journey is not just about having my needs met. I've done more 'ministry' and been ministered to more in the last four plus years than ever." The spiritual journey spurred on through F3 helped him offer himself as a sacrifice to be broken and remodeled by God: "My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise" (Psalm 51:17). This is why these crucible experiences are acknowledged as the catalysts and not the transforming agents. It is the Spirit who transforms, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Cor 3:18).

This research does not suggest that men are able to find their salvific answer to that question merely through participation in F3. To suggest this would negate the pervasive nature of

sin. Instead, it is argued that crucible events are moments through which God disturbs people in order to grab their attention so that the Word within may be revealed.

Just as the collective nature of sin was revealed by the first Adam and confirmed through Cain, each man must also be confronted with his personal sin and question whether he is good enough. These confrontations are the divine moments where God does the work of transformation.

As one Navy Seal described his catalytic event:

I was angry at the world in general and God in particular. Why did this have to happen to me? In retrospect, I see God was letting me know I was only human, and that being a Seal was just a job.

“Howard, you were too hardheaded to listen to me after you were shot once. You didn’t listen after the second shot. Here, big boy, let me give you your third bullet hole. Now, do I have your attention. You are not superman. You are where you are because of me. Not because of you. This is my way of getting your attention. Now that I’ve got it, let me mold you further. You are not a finished product.”

He humbled me and brought me back down to earth. Made me become a father to my children. At the time, no one could have convinced me of all that, but looking back, getting shot in the leg was the best thing that happened to me.⁴²

For Adam, Cain, this Seal, and every man, the crucible becomes the divine interruption that humbles a man so that he decides which way he will respond. He will follow the path of Adamic passivity, Cainite Hyper-Masculinity or—as Paul describes Jesus—that of the Second Adam who perfectly displays purposeful masculinity.

The way this research was conducted and scored suggests that all men have a battle of the three masculine archetypes present within them at all times. Whatever the participants’ belief systems, when men face a challenge they have the tendency to become Adamic and passively

⁴² Howard E Wasdin and Stephen Templin, *SEAL Team Six: Memoirs of an Elite Navy Seal Sniper* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2011), 272.

disengage, or they may have the Cainite impulse to react with hyper-masculinity. However, they also have the capacity to heed the invitation of Jesus Christ to be humbled and molded by accepting the challenge to follow Christ into a purposeful masculinity.

For Christ perfectly demonstrated the hero's quest towards obedience, servanthood and commitment as expressed in Philippians 2: 1-13:

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—*continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

It is through a surrendering and unity with Christ that the precarious nature of masculinity continues to be worked out with fear and trembling. F3 provides comrades and father-figures who give glimpses of the Second Adam, as one participant articulated: “I have found Christ

through the men of F3. I was desperate and in need of a foundation and these men were there to help pick me up and show me a better way.” The way he describes is the way of Jesus Christ who leads us through the cross to new life.

F3 is similar to the efforts of Christian counseling and the spiritual formation practices of the Jesuits. All seek to accomplish the same—to disturb an existing system in order to reveal the need for God to change hearts. This is described by the Barnabas Counseling Center’s “methodology of change” as follows:

Our job as counselors is to reveal the human condition, exposing it in the moment, both in its potential to become what God has in mind and in its self-centered autonomy. It is in this context that we pray God’s Spirit will choose to move in the depths of one’s heart. Ultimately, no methodology or theology can change a heart. Only God can.⁴³

F3 exposes a man’s human condition and inspires him with the potential for a new identity. Likewise, the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola create a path for spiritual progression through an intentional period of self-discovery under the guidance of a spiritual director, so that participants may return with emerging energy, clarity, and acknowledgment of personal weaknesses.⁴⁴ These spiritual exercises were designed to be “experienced not read.”⁴⁵ Rather than contemplative experiences, F3 provides spiritual exercises within the framework of a physical exercise.

Ultimately no spiritual practice apart from God can change the human heart. This research demonstrated that, in fact. It should be noted that a man’s tendency towards Cainite

⁴³ The Barnabas Center, “The Barnabas Model,” n.d., accessed February 24, 2017, <http://thebarnabascenter.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Barnabas-Model-Position-Paper.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Chris Lowney, *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2005), 47.

⁴⁵ James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 20.

hyper-masculinity is not statistically demonstrable. A divisive egoism can easily creep into an all-male community, creating a fraternity of hyper-masculinity.⁴⁶ A threatened man responds impulsively and aggressively. This suggests that men who seek to embrace challenges must remain vigilant in mastering their sin, specifically the temptation towards hyper-masculinity.

As God warns Cain: “If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it” (Gen. 4:7). This struggle is where man’s greatness lies: “Man’s greatness lies in overcoming environmental obstacles and embracing morality under the most extenuating of circumstances... ‘Timshel’ is the term God used in his relation to Cain: you can and must, in the final analysis, be master (*timshol*) of your emotions and deeds.”⁴⁷ Just as Samuel Hamilton discovered in *East of Eden*, this word gives a man the ultimate crucible—that of withstanding sin.

However, as Paul articulates it, the ultimate crucible is not accomplished by any man: “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do but what I hate I do...for I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out” (Romans 7:15, 18, NIV). Tim Keller comments that:

This means the Christian heart cries two things at once...first there is the desperate cry of discouragement as we look at own efforts and failings...[and] only if our hearts truly cry at our wretchedness can we then know the hope and liberation of looking away from ourselves and to what God has done...through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ In another Bosson and Vandello study, men “take higher-risk financial bets when surrounded by status-similar males.”

Jennifer K. Bosson, Joseph A. Vandello, and Jonathan R. Weaver, “Intrepid, Imprudent, or Impetuous? The Effects of Gender Threats on Men’s Financial Decisions,” *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 14 (2013): 185.

⁴⁷ Chaya Greenberger, “Cain and Abel: Mis(managing) Rejection and Unmet Expectations,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly (Online)* 44, no. 2 (April 2016): 121.

⁴⁸ Timothy Keller, *Romans 1-7 for You* (Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2014), 172.

This is the cry that the struggles of F3 elicit from a man each day: his continual dependency upon God for transformation.

Men are constantly confronted by the discouragement of their Adamic and Cainite tendencies along with a hope of becoming purposeful in their masculinity. These crucible experiences strip men to reveal their need for hope. Charles Colson retells the story of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Russian author, who spent years in Siberian prison camps:

Like other prisoners, Solzhenitsyn worked in the fields, his days a pattern of backbreaking labor and slow starvation. One day the hopelessness became too much to bear. Solzhenitsyn felt no purpose in fighting on, his life would make no ultimate difference. Laying his shovel down, he walked slowly to a crude work-site bench. He knew at any moment a guard would order him up and when he failed to respond bludgeon him to death, probably with his own shovel. He'd seen it happen many times.

As he sat waiting, head down, he felt a presence. Slowly he lifted his eyes. Next to him sat an old man with a wrinkled, utterly expressionless face. Hunched over, the man drew a stick through the sand at Solzhenitsyn's feet, deliberately tracing out the sign of the cross.

As Solzhenitsyn started at that rough outline, his entire perspective shifted. He knew he was merely one man against the all-powerful Soviet empire. Yet in that moment, he also knew that the hope of all mankind was represented by that simple cross—and through its power anything was possible. Solzhenitsyn, slowly got up, picked up his shovel, and went back to work—not knowing that his writings on truth and freedom would one day enflame the whole world.⁴⁹

Solzhenitsyn experiences the painful stripping away of a crucible that leads him towards hopelessness. However, at the moment of ultimate despair, hope arrives to reorient his perspective so that he can be reintegrated into the community for a greater purpose. This ordeal allowed Solzhenitsyn to write, “That is why I turn back to the years of my imprisonment and say, sometimes to the astonishment of those about me: ‘Bless you, prison!’ I...have served enough

⁴⁹ Charles W Colson, *Loving God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 172.

time there. I nourished my soul there, and I say without hesitation: ‘Bless you, prison, for having been in my life!’”⁵⁰

Upon reflection, Solzhenitsyn is able to see the societal benefit of his struggles. Likewise, in Luke 22:31-2, Jesus challenges Peter saying, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” Jesus acknowledges that he is allowing Peter to undergo a crucible experience and is praying for Peter’s resiliency so that he may strengthen other men.

It is through these crucible events that God exposes a man’s deficiencies and then catalyzes the Spirit’s transformation within his life for the benefit of others. The ultimate answer that a man will discover to life’s question—“Am I good enough?”—is actually a resounding “No!”

Having beaten themselves physically, these men have heard the word within their heart that still says, “No, you are not good enough.” Yet through their individual “no” they can find the fullness of God’s grace, because their “no” is resolved through the final crucible—the Cross of Christ. It is there that Jesus Christ withstands sin, as God’s wrath is on public display. The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides God’s final answer: it is God’s “Yes” for our “No.”⁵¹ Jürgen Moltmann writes, “In the bitterness of suffering that offers no escape, we find God’s love. At the heart of everything is God’s unswerving ‘Yes’.”⁵²

⁵⁰ Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn, Thomas P. Whitney, and H. T. Willetts, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, (New York, NY: WestviewPress, 1991), 616-617.

⁵¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Vol. 4.1* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004), 347.

⁵² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Power of the Powerless* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1983) 11.

Since Jesus Christ rejected passivity by taking on the form of humanity, those who surrender to Christ become imitators of the only one who is good enough. “To lose confidence in the flesh, to give God alone the glory—that means, concretely, to know what it is to be committed, unrelenting, intent, out to win. If there is one man who knows no passivity, then it is the *symmorphizomenos to thanatos Christoo* (the man who enters into the form of Christ's death).”⁵³ These crucibles allow men to enter into Christ's death, in order to reject passivity, take responsibility and lead courageously.

Accordingly, at the end of each F3 workout, men typically respond to God's “Yes” by praying for God's intervention that they might become better men, sons, husbands, fathers, bosses, employees, and community leaders. This research demonstrates that these prayers are being absorbed into the attitudes of men who have intentionally embraced the crucible events placed before them. Having come to the end of their challenge, they are prepared to call upon Christ for the energy to turn their attention to the next sphere of influence into which they are being sent.

⁵³ Karl Barth, Bruce L. McCormack, and Francis Watson, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 106.

‘Ay,’ he said aloud.
There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is just a noise such as a man might make,
involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hands and into the wood.

— Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and The Sea*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

AMPM – R3 Operational Definitions

In general (unless otherwise specified), scoring criteria is as follows:

- Scores from 0-20:
 - In the case of a skill: Indicates a major deficiency. Improvement is essential.
 - In the case of a personality trait: Indicates that the trait is lacking and will need to be nurtured and developed.
- Scores from 20-40:
 - In the case of a skill: Person may have some basic skill and understanding, but improvement is highly recommended.
 - In the case of a personality trait: Indicates that the person shows slight aspects of this trait, but it is still considered dormant. It will need to be developed.
- Scores from 40-60:
 - In the case of a skill: Person possesses at least basic knowledge and skill. Improvement is still recommended.
 - In the case of a personality trait: Indicates that the person has some aspects of the trait and a potential to develop it further if it is nurtured.
- Scores from 60-80:
 - In the case of a skill: Person has a fair amount of skill and knowledge. Some improvement is suggested.
 - In the case of a personality trait: Indicates that the person has this trait – it is likely to be a major part of their personality. It can still be developed further, however.
- Scores from 80+:
 - In the case of a skill: Person possesses a great deal of skill and knowledge.
 - In the case of a personality trait: Indicates that this is a dominant trait and a staple of the person's personality.

1) Emotional Stability: Assesses a person's overall level of calmness and emotional security. High scorers are composed, even in difficult circumstances. Low scorers tend to be more volatile, and struggle to stay calm and composed in stressful conditions.

Skills and/or traits that contribute:

- **Emotional Reactivity:** Assesses whether a person tends to experience strong emotions. High scorers tend to be temperamental, going from one extreme emotion to another rather easily. Low scorers tend to be indifferent, and show very little, if any emotional reaction to their circumstances. (Note: This is not indicative of emotional suppression – low emotional reactivity means that the person is not prone to *strong* emotional reactions).
- **Resiliency:** Ability to bounce back from adversity. High scorers are able to pick themselves up and move on from difficulties and failures – they do not dwell on them for too long, or allow themselves to become discouraged. They are less likely to shy away from difficult challenges for fear of not being able to cope. Low scorers are more likely to become overwhelmed when faced with hardship, and will find it difficult to push through. They can also struggle to let past issues or problems go.
- **Anger Command:** Ability to manage and regulate anger. High scorers are able to control their temper in potentially anger-inducing situations. Low scorers tend to become angry very easily, even in minor situations.
- **Impulse Command:** Ability to control inappropriate actions/responses. High scorers are less likely to take action without thinking things through. Low scorers tend to speak and act on impulse, and may often regret their actions.
- **Self-Confidence:** Assesses the degree to which a person believes in himself/herself. High scorers believe in their skills, and believe that they have something of value to offer. They approach challenges with the full belief that they can handle them. Low scorers lack self-confidence, which may, if it hasn't already, hold them back from achieving goals and taking on challenges.
- **Reaction to Stress:** Assesses how well a person handles stress. High scorers are able to deal with pressure in healthy manner, and may even thrive in stressful situations. Low scorers are more likely to become overwhelmed in stressful situations, and will not be at their best when under pressure.
- **Independence:** Assesses the degree of autonomy a person desires/exhibits. High scorers are self-governing. They do not need to rely on continuous guidance from others. Low scorers prefer to follow other people's lead and will often seek direction from others. NOTE: Some job positions require a great deal of independence, while others require more collaboration. The ideal score for this scale will vary depending on the needs of the employer.
- **Assertiveness:** Ability to express opinions, thoughts, and wishes in a clear, direct way, and deal with others in a self-assured manner. High scorers are able to stand up for and express themselves, even in potentially intimidating situations or with people who have strong personalities. Low scorers tend to be easily intimidated and would prefer to give in to others than express what they want. NOTE: There is a fine line between assertiveness and aggressiveness. If a person scores 80 or higher on this scale, it is important that they score high on Agreeableness as well.
- **Optimism:** Ability to see the brighter side of things. High scorers look for the best in negative situations and people, and choose to focus on and anticipate success rather than failure. Low scorers are more likely to be pessimistic, especially in difficult situations, and generally expect the worst.

2) Extroversion: Refers to an outward and interactive personal orientation. High scorers are extroverted while low scorers are introverted. NOTE: Extroversion and Introversion cannot be viewed as “good” or “bad.” Some job positions require a person to be more extroverted, but this doesn’t mean that introverts are incapable of interacting with others. The ideal score for this scale will vary depending on the needs of the position.

Skills and/or traits that contribute:

- **Sociability:** Tendency to seek out the company of others. High scorers are very outgoing and will seek out the company of others. They prefer to be around people than to be alone. Low scorers may not necessarily shy away from social situations, but would prefer to alternate between being with others and being on their own.
- **Self-Disclosure:** Desire and willingness to open up to others. High scorers share their thoughts and feelings easily and candidly, even with strangers. Low scorers prefer to keep their thoughts and feelings private, and will share very little, if anything at all (other than superficialities).
- **Approachability:** Assesses how amicable a person comes across as to others. High scorers give off a friendly “vibe” both in their demeanor and in the manner they interact with others. People often find it easy to talk to them. Low scorers do not endear themselves to others. This can make it difficult to build a rapport with people.
- **Orientation:** Assesses whether an individual prefers turning to others during tough times or would rather deal with things on their own. High scorers have an outward orientation. They prefer to lean on others when faced with hardship and rely on other people’s comfort and advice to help them get through it. Low scorers have an inward orientation. They prefer to deal with difficulties on their own rather than burden others. They keep problems to themselves.

3) Openness: Degree to which a person is interested in novel experiences. High scorers thrive on and seek out new experiences. Low scorers prefer to stick with what’s familiar and to what they know.

Skills and/or traits that contribute:

- **Perspective:** Ability to see people and the world from different perspectives. High scorers are broad-minded, and are able to see the “big picture.” They are able to view the world through other people’s eyes. Low scorers have a narrower perspective, unable to “see the forest for the trees.” They have difficulty understanding other people’s point of view and the “big picture.”
- **Curiosity:** Desire and willingness to seek out the unknown. High scorers are inquisitive and interested in the world around them. They are almost always willing to trying something new. Low scorers are not interested in “figuring out” their world. They tend to absorb information passively, accepting ideas rather than questioning them.
- **Interest in Knowledge:** Degree to which a person seeks out new information. High scorers are often very informed about the world, and may be an expert in at least one area. They hunger for knowledge and want to broaden their mind. Low scorers are not interested in expanding their skills or knowledge beyond what they already know. They are less likely to be critical thinkers.
- **Creative Thinking:** Ability to think “outside the box.” High scorers possess a great deal of imagination. They do not rely on conventional approaches and are able to come up with unique and original ideas. Low scorers tend to view situations or problems in a more logical and rational way. They think in a more conventional rather than creative manner.
- **Individuality:** Extent to which a person is willing to conform. High scorers are independent thinkers. They do not conform to societal norms of how they should act and think or what they should believe. Low scorers prefer accepted and conventional ways of doing things, and prefer to conform to the norm.

- **Adaptability:** Ability to deal with change. High scorers can adjust to new situations fairly quickly. When faced with unpredictability, they are able to tap into internal and external resources and learn to adapt. Low scorers tend to be thrown off by last-minute or unexpected occurrences. It takes them time to “learn the ropes” and acclimate.

4) Agreeableness: Refers to general good-naturedness and likability. High scorers are affable, both in terms of their words and their conduct. People who interact with a high scorer feel comfortable and accepted. Low scorers may, whether intentionally or not, alienate or daunt other people. They often appear standoffish.

Skills and/or traits that contribute:

- **Trust:** Degree to which a person is willing to place their faith in others. High scorers are willing to give others the benefit of the doubt, and are willing to accept people as trustworthy unless they prove otherwise. Low scorers distrust most, if not all people, and tend to have a cynical view of human nature.
- **Authenticity:** Assesses whether a person is upfront and sincere. High scorers show their true self; they express their thoughts and feelings sincerely. Low scorers are more likely to hide their true thoughts and feelings, and may put a “mask” on, never truly allowing others to get to know them completely.
- **Willingness to Compromise:** Desire to accommodate the needs of others. High scorers are willing to meet others halfway, especially in conflict situations. Low scorers prefer to have their way, and would rather win an argument than compromise.
- **Egoism:** Assesses whether a person views themselves or their interests as more important than other people's. High scorers tend to have a big ego. They see themselves as being superior to others and will often put their own needs first. Low scorers are humble and see themselves as being equal to others. NOTE: A low score on this scale is considered ideal.
- **Kindness:** Willingness and desire to help others. High scorers are considerate and care about the well-being of others. Low scorers will not go out of their way to help others (if they help at all). They may be seen as being indifferent if not uncaring.
- **Aggressiveness:** Assesses whether a person tends to interact with others in a hostile manner. High scorers tend to become hostile when angry, and may antagonize or insult others. They tend to be intimidating. Low scorers are more easygoing and are not likely to become hostile when angry. NOTE: A low score on this scale is considered ideal.
- **Competitiveness:** Extent to which a person desires to win and be the best. High scorers are highly competitive, even when it comes to friendly competition. They need to come out on top and hate to lose. Low scorers are not interested in winning — or at least don't consider it essential. They can still be competitive, but don't put a great deal of emphasis on being the best. NOTE: A low score on this scale is considered ideal.
- **Dominance:** Extent to which a person desires to be in control. High scorers are very take-charge. They need to be the one in control. Low scorers tend to be more easygoing and would be willing to share decisions or power. NOTE: A low score on this scale is considered ideal.
- **Charm:** Ability to draw and win over people. High scorers thrive in the spotlight and can easily persuade and entertain others. Low scorers do not have a natural charisma and are more likely to struggle to build a rapport with others.

5) Conscientiousness: Refers to a competency and productivity orientation. High scorers are responsible and industrious at work. Low scorers tend to be lackadaisical and less concerned about getting work done effectively and efficiently.

Skills and/or traits that contribute:

- **Striving:** Extent to which a person works toward self-improvement. High scorers are motivated to improve themselves and to achieve. Low scorers are not ambitious, and don't see a need for change or improvement. They are content with the status quo.
- **Diligence:** Willingness to work hard and follow through on tasks and goals. High scorers are determined and purposeful in their approach to work. They continuously meet objectives and get tasks done. Low scorers tend to be more laissez-faire, if not inconsistent, in their work approach. They may put in the minimum effort needed to get work done, but are highly unlikely to go above and beyond the call of duty.
- **Organization:** Ability to maintain order and neatness. High scorers actively employ strategies to keep themselves on track and keep their workspace tidy. Low scorers are prone to disorganization, which can impact their productivity and quality control.
- **Dependability:** Extent to which a person is reliable. High scorers are reliable and responsible, and can be depended on to work hard. Low scorers may fail to live up to expectations, and tend to be inconsistent if not unreliable.
- **Attention to Detail:** Ability to focus on and notice details. High scorers are meticulous and complete tasks carefully and attentively. Low scorers are more likely to be careless and to miss or ignore details.
- **Efficiency:** Ability to work in a resourceful manner. High scorers actively implement strategies to ensure that time and other resources are used in the most proficient way possible. Low scorers are more likely to waste time and effort, and may have trouble meeting deadlines.
- **Self-Discipline:** Ability to monitor and control one's behavior. High scorers have a high tolerance for frustration and are able to persevere in the face of obstacles or unpleasant tasks. Low scorers tend to lose focus and get sidetracked easily. They tend to struggle to motivate themselves and often need a push from others.

Impression Management: This scale is in place to assess whether a test-taker answered the test questions in a socially desirable manner. **Important note:** A low score is ideal for this scale. A high score would indicate that a person attempted to answer the question in a manner that would make him or her look good, rather than choosing responses that reflect his/her actual feelings and behavior. A high score could potentially invalidate a person's results.

APPENDIX B

Archetypal Data Sets

Biblical Masculinity Archetype

Population	Dependability	Trust	Kindness	Orientation	Sociability	Self-discipline	Biblical Masculinity
Mean Psycho (Gender Neutral)	73.33	48.08	70.51	44.35	51.78	49.27	56.22
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>13.56</i>	<i>19.37</i>	<i>16.88</i>	<i>17.47</i>	<i>21.46</i>	<i>15.92</i>	
AVG Man (AMPM)	73.43	47.46	67.98	43.14	51.15	51.11	55.71
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>12.73</i>	<i>18.93</i>	<i>18.14</i>	<i>16.93</i>	<i>21.35</i>	<i>15.41</i>	
AVG WBB Tester	86.61	63.03	83.52	55.41	55.28	56.47	66.72
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>11.59</i>	<i>13.16</i>	<i>8.44</i>	<i>17.04</i>	<i>22.34</i>	<i>18.41</i>	<i>8.00</i>
F3	86.89	63.67	84.79	56.00	55.92	58.98	67.71
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>10.66</i>	<i>11.67</i>	<i>7.40</i>	<i>16.47</i>	<i>20.21</i>	<i>16.94</i>	<i>6.73</i>
NON-F3	86.09	61.81	81.09	54.28	54.06	51.69	64.84
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>13.75</i>	<i>15.78</i>	<i>9.76</i>	<i>18.58</i>	<i>26.94</i>	<i>20.74</i>	<i>9.85</i>
Intentional Crucibles	86.94	63.53	84.02	56.21	56.18	59.48	67.73
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>10.57</i>	<i>12.74</i>	<i>8.01</i>	<i>16.34</i>	<i>20.94</i>	<i>16.69</i>	<i>7.16</i>
Unintentional	85.81	61.81	82.30	53.44	53.07	49.11	64.26
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>14.04</i>	<i>14.22</i>	<i>9.24</i>	<i>18.64</i>	<i>26.15</i>	<i>20.48</i>	<i>9.46</i>

Adamic Archetype

Population	Assertiveness	Striving	Attention to Detail	Diligence	Independence	Approachability	Adam
Mean Psycho (Gender Neutral)	53.99	63.32	58.08	57.18	51.81	60.47	43.13
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>14.17</i>	<i>19.33</i>	<i>15.58</i>	<i>18.75</i>	<i>19.48</i>	<i>20.59</i>	
AVG Man (AMPM)	55.55	63.17	56.33	56.11	53.57	58.61	43.90
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>13.68</i>	<i>20.09</i>	<i>15.12</i>	<i>19.00</i>	<i>17.70</i>	<i>20.42</i>	
AVG WBB Tester	57.48	62.10	59.17	65.83	66.58	71.40	41.77
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>15.04</i>	<i>14.72</i>	<i>16.06</i>	<i>14.91</i>	<i>11.98</i>	<i>14.44</i>	<i>6.59</i>
F3	56.41	64.10	60.48	66.02	66.05	71.57	41.25
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>14.56</i>	<i>14.71</i>	<i>16.90</i>	<i>14.91</i>	<i>12.23</i>	<i>13.92</i>	<i>6.83</i>
NON-F3	59.53	58.28	56.69	65.47	67.59	71.06	42.76
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>15.80</i>	<i>14.07</i>	<i>15.47</i>	<i>15.04</i>	<i>11.49</i>	<i>16.24</i>	<i>5.90</i>
Intentional Crucibles	56.83	64.27	62.27	67.23	66.12	71.36	40.69
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>14.24</i>	<i>13.83</i>	<i>16.30</i>	<i>15.08</i>	<i>12.34</i>	<i>14.48</i>	<i>6.74</i>
Unintentional	59.07	56.78	51.59	62.41	67.70	71.48	44.40
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>16.55</i>	<i>14.68</i>	<i>13.33</i>	<i>13.88</i>	<i>11.23</i>	<i>15.32</i>	<i>6.06</i>

Cainite Archetype

Population	Impulse Command	Emotional Reactivity	Aggressiveness	Anger Command	Egoism	Dominance	Cain
Mean Psycho (Gender Neutral)	49.50	50.86	35.25	52.68	42.41	49.88	39.46
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>16.14</i>	<i>11.45</i>	<i>17.79</i>	<i>14.55</i>	<i>13.59</i>	<i>19.54</i>	
AVG Man (AMPM)	49.09	48.79	40.30	54.14	44.18	51.82	40.27
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>15.66</i>	<i>11.78</i>	<i>18.23</i>	<i>14.85</i>	<i>15.07</i>	<i>19.89</i>	
AVG WBB Tester	71.97	37.55	30.13	72.09	29.69	50.15	29.07
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>11.55</i>	<i>12.73</i>	<i>13.31</i>	<i>13.75</i>	<i>12.16</i>	<i>13.37</i>	<i>6.80</i>
F3	71.90	38.54	29.54	71.05	29.11	49.87	29.16
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>11.40</i>	<i>13.34</i>	<i>14.04</i>	<i>14.82</i>	<i>12.53</i>	<i>13.31</i>	<i>7.18</i>
NON-F3	72.09	35.66	31.25	74.06	30.78	50.69	28.89
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>12.86</i>	<i>11.21</i>	<i>11.77</i>	<i>11.36</i>	<i>11.35</i>	<i>14.04</i>	<i>6.12</i>
Intentional Crucibles	72.65	37.73	29.23	71.35	29.52	49.82	28.90
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>11.65</i>	<i>13.42</i>	<i>13.45</i>	<i>15.03</i>	<i>12.43</i>	<i>13.68</i>	<i>6.52</i>
Unintentional	70.30	37.11	32.33	73.89	30.11	50.96	29.48
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>12.37</i>	<i>11.07</i>	<i>12.90</i>	<i>10.59</i>	<i>11.57</i>	<i>13.32</i>	<i>6.38</i>

APPENDIX C

Psychometric Report AMPM—R3 (Advanced Multi-Dimensional Personality Matrix)

Validity Analysis

Comparison variable: Gender

- Women ($n = 330$)
- Men ($n = 329$)

Analysis shows significant differences on the following scales ($p < .05$):

- Men ($\bar{x} = 54.5$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 52.1$) on Emotional Stability ($t(657) = -3.438; p < 0.01$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 60.7$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 56.3$) on Agreeableness ($t(635) = 6.413; p < 0.001$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 51.6$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 54.8$) on Emotional Reactivity ($t(657) = 3.189; p < 0.01$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 56.2$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 51.3$) on Resiliency ($t(657) = -3.848; p < 0.001$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 56.7$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 52.5$) on Reaction to Stress ($t(657) = -3.194; p < 0.01$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 53.6$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 49.8$) on Independence ($t(644) = -2.513; p < 0.05$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 55.6$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 52.8$) on Assertiveness ($t(657) = -2.472; p < 0.05$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 75.4$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 72.8$) on Perspective ($t(642) = 2.185; p < 0.05$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 67.8$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 64.8$) on Curiosity ($t(649) = 2.342; p < 0.05$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 67.1$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 63.4$) on Interest in Knowledge ($t(657) = -2.614; p < 0.01$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 65.9$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 59.8$) on Authenticity ($t(639) = 5.099; p < 0.001$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 44.2$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 39.5$) on Egoism ($t(627) = -4.397; p < 0.001$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 74.7$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 68.0$) on Kindness ($t(630) = 5.211; p < 0.001$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 40.3$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 30.8$) on Aggressiveness ($t(657) = -7.031; p < 0.001$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 44.9$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 34.8$) on Competitiveness ($t(645) = -6.782; p < 0.001$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 51.8$) outscored women ($\bar{x} = 48.8$) on Dominance ($t(657) = -1.974; p < 0.05$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 55.0$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 51.6$) on Organization ($t(657) = 2.411; p < 0.05$).
- Women ($\bar{x} = 60.3$) outscored men ($\bar{x} = 56.3$) on Attention to Detail ($t(657) = 3.289; p < 0.01$).

Analysis shows marginally significant differences on the following scales ($p < .1$):

- Men ($\bar{x} = 61.3$) marginally outscored women ($\bar{x} = 58.8$) on Individuality ($t(657) = -1.714; p < 0.1$).
- Men ($\bar{x} = 51.1$) marginally outscored women ($\bar{x} = 49.0$) on Self-discipline ($t(657) = -1.727; p < 0.1$).

Means and Standard Deviations for Gender

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Reactivity	Women	330	51.63	11.07
	Men	329	48.79	11.78
Anger Command	Women	330	53.08	13.83
	Men	329	54.14	14.85
Impulse Command	Women	330	50.74	15.92
	Men	329	49.09	15.66
Trust	Women	330	48.11	19.33
	Men	329	47.46	18.93
Egoism	Women	330	39.50	12.10
	Men	329	44.18	15.07
Kindness	Women	330	74.69	14.73
	Men	329	67.98	18.14
Aggressiveness	Women	330	30.75	16.50
	Men	329	40.27	18.23
Independence	Women	330	49.83	20.47
	Men	329	53.57	17.70
Assertiveness	Women	330	52.83	14.60
	Men	329	55.55	13.68
Sociability	Women	330	50.41	21.31
	Men	329	51.15	21.35
Orientation	Women	330	44.35	17.15
	Men	329	43.14	16.93
Competiveness	Women	330	34.79	17.82
	Men	329	44.941	20.37
Striving	Women	330	63.45	19.56
	Men	329	63.17	20.09
Diligence	Women	330	58.39	18.41
	Men	329	56.11	19.00
Attention to Detail	Women	330	60.30	15.86
	Men	329	56.33	15.12
Self-Discipline	Women	330	48.96	16.60
	Men	329	51.11	15.41

APPENDIX D

Follow-Up Interview Questions

- *How has taking on intentional challenges (such as endurance races, physical workouts) prepared you to handle unexpected challenges (such as health issues, depression, job loss)?*

P1: “It has helped me in multiple ways. At 48 I am in the best shape of my life. The health concerns I worry about is how to get faster running and competing in events and pushing myself against younger men. It has taught me how to manage pain and know how much harder I can push myself. Really cool to not worry about being healthy and worry about being fast and knowing how hard I can push myself. In the world of relationships and management(family and work) it translates to how hard I work and managing balance. How important rest is to success and not being distracted by drinking, staying out late or eating poorly(which I still do some).…”

P2: “The mental preparation that goes with those events is just as important as the physical preparation and knowing that I can achieve things physically that I never thought I could do, like run on a 200 mile relay team over 29 hours, helps me understand that when I encounter other obstacles in life that I can work through those as well.”

P3: “more energy, stronger support network, self-confidence.”

P4: “I would say that any event that causes me to use emotional strength to pull through tough segments is an exercise in emotional strengthening. Any emotional strength I can build will certainly benefit me in unexpected challenge. One of the nonspecific benefits to putting yourself into these challenges.”

P6: “Increased self confidence which leads to resiliency.”

P7: “I believe the challenges are reinforcing my inner courage and discipline. Challenges also remind me to not sweat the small stuff.”

P8: “The combination of training for Mt. Rainier and participating in F3 was a great motivator for me last year. It allowed me to tackle difficult challenges both professionally and personally because I had developed a very strong willpower. Furthermore, my fitness level was at its highest level which always provided an extra burst of energy for me. However, post Rainier has been a mixed bag. At times, I am able to fall back on the experience and tell myself that I if I can survive my ordeal in Rainier, I can overcome anything. But in lower times, the gravity of the situation takes hold and it is a deterrent. Being injured for almost a year has been the most difficult. With the absence of exercise as a stress reliever, it has negatively impacted almost every aspect of my life.”

P9: “More than anything, it provides perspective and objectivity. When you choose hardship, you own it, and therefore break the process down in order to complete it in the best way possible. When hardship comes from external sources, having been through "voluntary difficulty" gives that modicum of experience and understanding of how to manage it. Not to quote GORUCK, but you gain and understanding of what "It Can Always Be Worse" means. There's always a light at the end of the tunnel. You just have to work towards it the best you can.”

P10: “I don't really know because I have not really encountered any unexpected challenges recently. But the workouts certainly improve my attitude, the way I feel about myself, and give me a greater sense of purpose.”

P11: “Gave me greater confidence, helps me to be more grounded emotionally.”

P12: “It certainly makes a huge difference. Being strong physically prepares you for stressful situations. I know that exercise has been shown to help treat depression.”

• *How has your participation in F3 impacted your relationships?*

P1: “It has given me a balance I had lost since before I was married. I was very unhappy and had no idea I was until I got to know the men who I am closest too in F3. Also given me examples to follow by watching men live their life in a way I want to live mine. Before F3 if you asked me if I liked living in Charlotte I would have told I did not care even after living here for 10 years. Now the relationships I have build make me content and happy to know Charlotte is my home. This gives my family direction and foundation.”

P2: “I am a better husband, father, son and friend because the men of F3 hold me accountable whether they know it or not because I don't want to let them down.”

P3: “More community relationships with other F3 members, more time and energy with my family. More quality time with others, not just sitting around watching TV.”

P4: “Opened my eyes to a lot of folks I did not know our commonality.”

P5: “Not enough room to elaborate but suffice it to say that my closest friendships are F3 brothers and they have come alongside me like no other friends in my life.”

P6: “Enhanced in number and depth. Pushed me to explore my faith at a deeper level and in doing so it has helped me think more about how I treat people. Finally, it has opened up the number of people that I interact with.”

P8: “What I like to tell people the best thing about F3 is not that I have met 100-200 men that I did not know but that I have met 100-200 men and I have no idea what they do for a living. That is a unique experience in today's society.”

P9: “For the most part, it has been very positive. I am much more intentional and focused in my interactions with people, especially those I consider friends. There has been some strain introduced in some corners, including with my wife. I think that has to do with the passion and time I feel pulled to focus on F3 itself. Not to use a religious term, but it does periodically become a false idol of mine, and I have to fairly regularly pull back on my participation to ensure I'm not neglecting the people in my life who are not directly involved in it. Like with anything, too much of a good thing can turn bad, so I've learned that I have to regularly re-locate the balance between F3 and the rest of my life.”

P11: “The men I have met in F3 have become a huge support as I'm going through a major transition in my marriage and family.”

P12: “I feel like I am more dependable.”

• *How has your participation in F3 impacted your vocation (work/job)?*

P1: “Before F3, everytime a boss asked me if I was interested in management. I always declined. I never thought it was something I had the talent to do. After F3 I realized I had a natural ability to lead and needed to continue to improve and share the gift at work. Since I joined F3 5 1/2 years ago I have risen from a sales person to heading up our National Sales Team. Big help! I have started to become a better leader of people in that I am more invested in my people and their success.”

P3: “Health benefits certainly increases my ability to do work.”

P5: “Toughness—mental and physical—leads to enhanced effectiveness. Ability to grind goes up. Walking into the office post workout on a high leads to better mood.”

P6: “On the negative side - I may be more impatient than before - do I now expect more from other people? Particularly a team attitude and sheer effort? Am I let down more easily?”

P7: “I have reduced putting all of my energy in my work, I still work hard, it is just not my sole focus.”

P9: “Surprisingly enough, this has not been as positive as I expected. If I worked with F3 men, my answer would be different. I don't, however, and I find it frustrating to be managed at not led in my work. I'm not in a leadership position, so I struggle mightily with precisely the issues that F3 tries to mitigate, and I lack the patience to accept my current lot in life. I will say this is something that I fought with previous to F3, but seeing real leadership in action has only caused that to grow. I'm still searching for the solution to this.”

P11: “It has given me a place to share what I do and at times help others.”

P12: “I would like to think that my exercise has helped me to be more fatigue resistant. My job requires a lot of mental jousting, and I can tell if I have missed a workout recently.”

• *How has your participation in F3 impacted your emotional health?*

P1: “I am much more balanced and I keep working on being better. I have found contentment in my life and it has made my day to day life slower and manageable. Still work in process.”

P2: “I believe that I am a happier person because I am learning not to let the tough times impact me as much as they have previously.”

P3: “More alert and active giving me more stability.”

P4: “Increased strength by way of internal emotional strength, as well as value to the relationships that I know will be there when I may one day need it. Thus making me feel stronger in my emotional health.”

P8: “Same answer for emotional health. Being injured and not being able to participate in F3 has had the complete opposite impact. My emotional health has been far worse not being able to be a part of F3.”

P9: “Significantly to the positive. F3 keeps me sane.”

P11: “It has been a great support for the emotional ups and downs, and a place to connect with other men that are experiencing similar challenges and realize I'm not the only one and there are others that can relate to me.”

P12: “less likely to show stress/anger at little things.”

• *How has your participation in F3 impacted your spiritual life?*

P2: “I am more focused on following the teachings of Christ so that I can continue to be a better husband, father, son and friend.”

P3: “In the past I poured all I had into work, church, and family. Many times in that order. Now I feel I'm giving that same effort to all aspects of life instead of running out of gas without fulfilling my obligations to any of the key areas...”

P4: “Confidence in knowing that there are more guys in the same life stage and spiritual growth as myself.”

P5: “Dramatically. The Lord impressed on me that the faith journey is not just about having my needs met. I've done more "ministry" and been ministered to more in the last 4+ years than ever. F3 is the best construct I've ever known of for evangelism, discipleship, mercy ministry, etc. Perhaps the American church could learn from F3. Scratch that, the church as we know it here could definitely learn from F3”

P7: “Pushed me to be more active in the doing - getting into the Bible. More Bible studies. Getting myself out here more.”

P8: “Network of male friends that I go to church with, F3 has become my church Life group. Participating in F3 improved my spiritual life.”

P9: “It gave me a spiritual life. My first year with F3 saw me go from a complete skeptic to an outright seeker. I devoured Keller, Spurgeon and Lewis, changed churches and really started listening. I'd say I've wandered a bit in the past 9ish months, but mainly due to what I would call institutional issues as opposed to spiritual ones. Put simply F3 opened my heart by showing me other men working through the same questions I've always had. By showing me that a spiritual life wasn't easy, that it wasn't some "aha moment" where a switch gets flipped, F3 made that life accessible to me. I'm still in the process of getting there, but I'm miles further down the path than I was 3 years ago.”

P10: “It gives me a focused chance to pray with others a few more times a week. I also hear about many good things which improve my spiritual attitude.”

P11: “Greatly! I have found Christ through the men of F3. I was desperate and in need of a foundation and these men were there to help pick me up and show me a better way.”

P12: “We now have a Bible study I participate in, as well as a band of brothers I can discuss issues with.”

APPENDIX E

Pastoral Covenant Groups – A Proposed Structure or Starting Point

~Dr. Jim Singleton

Part of being in a “covenanted order” is the willingness for pastors to commit ourselves into the care and accountability of other pastors. In FOP and ECO we believe this will increase our capacity to be the pastors we sense that God is calling us to be. We understand that there are forces inside of us as human beings which can make it easier to be individualists and to resist being known. We know that we will remain blind to being “curved in upon ourselves” (Luther) unless someone helps us to see and repent. Hence, we believe that the Covenanted Order provides the external accountability to keep us focused upon our missional calling and our biblical/theological roots.

Thus, a pastor shall be a part of a Pastoral Covenant Group (PCG) in order to increase accountability and encouragement and in order to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. The purpose of these groups is to coach, encourage and pray for one another as pastors strive for greater missional effectiveness, by:

- Exploring the health of each other’s current ministry;
- Exploring the future objectives of each other’s ministry;
- Address challenges and obstacles to meeting those objectives;
- Share best practices and insights;
- Explore each other’s physical, spiritual, relational, emotional, vocational and congregational health.

These PCGs are ordinarily 5-8 pastors organized around a relational willingness to commit. There could be groups organized with similar church types or proximate geography. These groups could be ones already in existence from years past. They may also consist of pastors in similar life or ministry stages. It would be one of the hopes of FOP and ECO that the groups might include a vision for mentoring younger pastors. Normally, due to the vulnerability and desired relational intimacy, the groups will be same-gender.

Pastoral Covenant Groups will be peer-to-peer relationships. They shall meet together face-to-face **at least** once a year. They are also encouraged to find ways to connect throughout the year. PCGs shall begin with the questions provided below, but may appropriately include materials from various Pastoral Rules, the Fellowship Covenant or other resources.

Composition of the Pastoral Covenant Groups – Each shall be comprised of 5 to 8 pastors, representing congregations or other related ministries. These groups can be comprised of pastors who are all in ECO, or all in FOP, or a mix of the two. The groups are self-selective. For ECO pastors, each presbytery’s Committee on Ministry (or equivalent) shall ensure that all pastors are

participating in a PCG. FOP pastors shall participate in a PCG as designated and agreed to in the Fellowship Covenant.

Commitment – The PCG should stay together 3 to 4 years together, thus giving a period of time to bond. After that period of time you may re-covenant, or you may change the composition of the group. This commitment provides a natural breaking point if change is needed.

Pre-work - Each pastor will need to prayerfully spend time developing his or her thoughts and answers to the Covenant questions. The time each pastor spends on these questions will be significant and strategic. The answers or thoughts arising from these questions may provide the basis for discussion among the group. If the groups agrees, written copies of the answers may be distributed ahead of time. Written copies should be distributed to the other session ahead of time.

Meeting Sites – Ideally, there might be a retreat-like setting for the annual meeting – away from normal work locations. The group can decide what location might be best and may include a rotation of hosting among the various members of the group.

Time Commitment – It would be best to plan on 8 hours of talking time together. Table fellowship is encouraged. An overnight somewhere might be helpful.

Suggested Outline of Initial Meeting

- 1) Getting to know each other
 - a. Log in with brief introductions and current ministry context
 - b. Sharing of Biographical Histories
 - c. Sharing of Call Stories
- 2) Going deeper
 - a. Sharing of 6 areas of disclosure of health:
 - i. Spiritual
 - ii. Relational
 - iii. Physical
 - iv. Emotional
 - v. Vocational
 - vi. Congregational.
 - b. Engage in prayer after each person shares. Sharing continues into the next morning, if needed. Vulnerability and trust will grow over time together.
- 3) Conclusion and looking ahead
 - a. Concluding questions might include:
 - i. “What did we all learn from this exercise?”
 - ii. “How will accountability work over the next year?”
 - iii. When we will meet again?
 - b. Ideally, the next meeting location, date and time will be set before all parties depart.

Challenges

This is something new for many of us. It may feel awkward in the beginning – many pastors have never done this with a group of pastors. For the PCGs to have maximum effect each pastor will need to focus on humility and vulnerability. Initially, groups should intentionally work on developing trust, being genuinely open, and practicing transparency. Confidentiality is paramount. Cynical attitudes and gossip will need to be resisted. Bragging would be out of place –yet a focus on what the Holy Spirit has done or is doing in your midst is to be celebrated. Best practices should be shared and enjoyed by all. Mistakes and failures can be learning experiences for each pastor.

While this proposed structure may serve as a starting for PCGs, the groups may find as relationships develop that meetings and structure may change. Groups may decide to include continuing education or learning opportunities as they gather. Or, they may engage in more structured prayer, Scripture meditation, or theological engagement as part of their time together. Although the structures and/or process can be flexible, the core purpose of these covenant groups – authentic accountability and faithful encouragement – should not be neglected.

Some Suggested Questions for engagement

Introductions and Biographical Questions

- 1) Describe your family of origin and where it is now.
 - a. What is/was the greatest influence of your father? How has/did that relationship move over time?
 - b. What is/was your relationship like with your mother and how has/did that change and grow over time?
 - c. Describe your relationship with your siblings and how that has shaped and formed you.
- 2) Discuss your current family situation.
 - a. What are the joys and challenges in your current familial relationships?
 - b. If married, how would you describe your marriage? What are the joys and delights of life with your spouse? How does your spouse encourage or challenge your relationship with Christ? Describe some of the past challenges or disappointments in your marriage and how you and your spouse overcame them. How are you upholding fidelity in your marriage?
 - c. If not married, describe your relational status – are you divorced, widowed, never been married, dating? How is that for you – are you joyful, content, grieving, unsettled, frustrated, lonely, thankful? How are you upholding a chaste life?
 - d. Are you a parent? Describe your relationship with your children. What joys and challenges have you experienced in parenthood?

Health Questions

- 1) Spiritual health:** What does spiritual health look like in your mind? Where are you in relation to that ideal? How are you actively engaging in your relationship with Christ? Are you keeping a regular quiet time? Are you actively engaging in scriptural study or meditation outside of your pastoral responsibilities? How is your prayer life? What prayer practices do you find particularly fruitful in your walk with Christ? How would you describe your worship practices? Describe your practice of confession of sin and repentance.
- 2) Relational health:** What would relational health look like in your mind? Where is that strongest and weakest in your current experience? What relationships cause you the greatest struggle? Are there areas of reconciliation or conflict that need to be addressed? How will you go about resolving that conflict? In which relationships do you find peace and joy? Are there relationships in your life that you have neglected or relationships that have run their course? Are you engaged in any relationships right now that are pulling or drawing you away from your primary familial relationships or pastoral responsibilities?
- 3) Physical health:** What is ideal physical health for you? What gets in your way from being in that place? What will you do to get there in the coming year? Do you exercise regularly? What are your eating habits? Do you get regular sleep? Have you struggled with any illnesses, chronic pain, or other debilitating health issues? What types of medications do you take, if any? Do you have any issues with drug abuse? Do you have a healthy relationship with alcohol consumption?
- 4) Emotional health:** What does it mean to be emotionally healthy? Where are you in relation to that ideal? What makes you angry, sad, frustrated? Do you struggle with depression? What things, situations or people do you avoid and why? When have you delighted in the Lord? When are you joyful, peaceful, content? In what ways do you struggle or wrestle with doubt?
- 5) Vocational health:** Vocational health may be a new term – but it means we are working in healthy ways – balance in our use of time, Sabbath, power, collegiality, and humility/pride. Where are you in this season of life? Are you actively keeping a Sabbath? How are you modeling a healthy work/life balance to others in your congregation and among the staff of the church? Are you practicing proper stewardship of your finances? What does stewardship look like for you and your family? In what ways are you praying and discerning your current sense of call?
- 6) Congregational health:** How would you describe the health of the congregation you serve? What dysfunctions have existed in the past or are currently present? What is the nature of conflict within the congregation and how have you all dealt with it? Describe your relationship with the session of the church. How have you all worked together to discern and cast the vision of the congregation? Is there a healthy development of spiritual leaders within the congregation? How has the congregation adapted to change in the past and/or how are they currently adapting to change? Describe and discuss your Mission Affinity Group relationships and meetings. What challenges lie ahead for the congregation?

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Providence Presbyterian Church (P.C.U.S.A.), Charlotte, N.C., 2002-2004.

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